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The Significance of Transcendental Object in the Critique of Pure Reason

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF TRANSCENDENTAL OBJECT
IN THE CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON

by

John W. Hauch

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

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LIFE

John W. Hauch was born in Marquette, Michigan, February 14, 1936.

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PREFACE

This present work germinated in an attempt to study Kant's doctrine of causality. A parenthetical remark regarding our interpretation of Kant's doctrine on transcendental object became necessary. However, we found that a mere parenthesis would not be adequate in the face of all the conflicting opinions regarding this doctrine. A thorough examination of Kant's authentic position became necessary.

This thesis is the result. We found the extensive efforts required in this undertaking to be totally justified. A proper understanding of Kant's authentic doctrine of transcendental object is essential to understand properly not only his doctrine on causality, but also his doctrine on the very nature of critical philosophy.

We will begin (Chapter I) by examining the interpretations of this doctrine by some of the more prominent historians of and commentators on Kant. The remainder of this thesis will then test an interpretation of transcendental object as a critically mature doctrine by the text of The Critique of Pure Reason. We will seek to discover whether Kant's transcendental object is a consistent and critically mature doctrine throughout the Critique in terms of the following questions: (1) Is it a thing-in-itself? (Chapter II §A). (2) Is it a mere appearance? If not, is it a third something between the realm of things-in-themselves and mere

appearances? (Chapter II §B). (3) What does the transcendental object have to do with totality and the nature of synthetic knowledge? In what does the transcendental object's unknowability consist? (Chapter II §C & D). (4) Is transcendental object involved with the world of appearances in some way even though it remains an unknown or "=X"? (Chapter II §E). (5) What does transcendental object have to do with the transcendental unity of apperception? What is its role in the grounding of our knowledge of objects -- is it necessary for this grounding? What role does the transcendental object play in the Transcendental Deduction of the categories? (Chapter III). (6) What is the role of the transcendental object in Kant's resolution of pure reason's natural conflict with itself? (Chapter IV).

We feel that the answers to these questions will be of great help to understand better not only transcendental object, but also the true nature of Kant's system of critical philosophy.

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A note on citation symbols used often in this work.

- A Refers to page numbers in the First Edition of the Kritik der reinen Vernunft.
- B Refers to page numbers of the Second Edition.
- () Numbers enclosed in parenthesis following page numbers of the Kritik refer to page numbers in: Kant, Immanuel. Critique of Pure Reason, translated by Norman Kemp Smith. New York: Macmillan, Second impression with corrections; 1933 (1st Edition, 1929).
- Werke Refers to: Kant, Immanuel. Kritik der reinen Vernunft, herausgegeben von Wilhelm Wieschedel. Werke in Sechs Banden, Band II; Wiesbaden: Insel--Verlag, 1956.

CHAPTER I

A SUMMARY OF THE INTERPRETATIONS OF TRANSCENDENTAL OBJECT BY SOME OF THE MORE PROMINENT COMMENTATORS AND HISTORIANS

Interpretations regarding Kant's transcendental object fall into three basic categories: (a) transcendental object means the same as thing-in-itself, (b) transcendental object is a purely subjective element in the knowing process and is distinct from thing-in-itself, (c) transcendental object is merely some kind of correlate of subjectivity and is distinct from thing-in-itself. In addition to these three general categories we will discuss (d) a unique interpretation by de Vleeschauwer and finally (e) a unique interpretation by M. Wartenberg. The latter will serve as a point of departure for the interpretation this thesis intends to test.

A. Transcendental Object Interpreted as Identical with Thing-in-Itself

This first general category of commentators and historians is by far the largest in number. Many of this first category indicate no tension whatsoever in identifying transcendental object and thing-in-itself at all times in the Critique. Others so identify them after some explicit and critical questioning or examination of their identity. In the latter

group are included some who do not explicitly discuss transcendental object but do imply that it is identical with thing-in-itself.

Several of this first major category of interpreters state that transcendental object means thing-in-itself in some passages while in other passages it does not.

There is a final group in this first general category who state that transcendental object is distinguished from noumenon in some way by Kant's express words, but are explicitly or implicitly forced into denying that transcendental object is really distinct from thing-in-itself.

Friederick Paulsen¹, August Messer², H. W. Cassirer³, B. A. G. Fuller and S. M. Mc Murrin⁴, and Eduard Zuermann⁵ all without questioning identify transcendental object with thing-in-itself. Kuno Fischer says that "Since all phenomena are empirical objects, the thing-in-itself is called in distinction therefrom 'the transcendental object'."⁶

¹Friederick Paulsen, Immanuel Kant: His Life and Doctrine (New York: Scribners, 1902), pp. 155, 250.

²August Messer, Kommentar zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Stuttgart: Strecker und Schröder, 1922), pp. 57, 132, 134. Cf. A. Messer, "Die 'Beziehung auf den Gegenstand' bei Kant," Kantstudien, VIII, 321-28.

³H. W. Cassirer, Kant's First Critique (New York: MacMillan, 1954), p. 288.

⁴B. A. G. Fuller, revised by Mc Murrin, A History of Philosophy (3rd ed.; New York: Holt, 1955), p. 241.

⁵Eduard Zuerman, "Die transscendentale Deduktion der Kategorien in Kants 'Kritik der reinen Vernunft'," Kantstudien, V, no. 4, pp. 444-70, esp. p. 454.

Heinrich Lanz identifies pure objectivity with the thing-in-itself, and thus finds that the transcendental object is "the pure form of objectivity since it is entirely empty of intuition and rests solely on pure thought in so far as it is a 'transcendental object', as an object 'in itself' (Ding an sich)." ⁷ Etienne Gilson equates "x", or unknown, with thing-in-itself; therefore, he appears to indicate implicitly that the "transcendental object = x" is identical with thing in itself even though he does not explicitly discuss the term transcendental object. ⁸

Heading those who identify transcendental object with thing-in-itself after a critical and explicit questioning is Norman Kemp Smith. He finds transcendental object to be an immature element in Kant's doctrines -- a precritical belief that the existence of a noumenal self was proved in the Paralogisms. Smith finds that transcendental object as it is employed in the Critique is the key to many inconsistencies and artificial connections in the Critique. ⁹ L. Busse also examines the interpretation

⁶ Kuno Fischer, A Critique of Kant, tr. from the German by W. S. Hough (London: Lowrey & Co., 1888), pp. 28-9.

⁷ Heinrich Lanz, "Das Problem der Gegenstandlichkeit in der modernen Logik," Kantstudien, No. 26, (1912), p. 19; cf. also pp. 16, 17, 28.

⁸ E. Gilson, Being and Some Philosophers (Second ed.; Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), pp. 130-131.

⁹ N. K. Smith, A Commentary to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (London: Macmillan, 1923), pp. 406-7, 214-15, 412, 327-31, 457.

that thing-in-itself, noumenon, and transcendental object are all identical with one another and concludes that this interpretation is correct.¹⁰

E. Caird views the transcendental object as a goal to be accomplished and identical with noumenon or thing-in-itself; therefore, we include him in this first general category even though he speaks of transcendental object as a correlate of subject. He says, "The transcendental object is the correlate of transcendental subject."¹¹ The unity of all perceptions connected together in the consciousness of one world "is the necessary correlate of the consciousness of the self in apprehending that world."¹² The continuous synthesis of experience is guided by an unrealizable absolute whole of things existing independently of the subject as a noumenon or thing-in-itself.¹³ All objects of experience are referred to a transcendental object. The consciousness of transcendental object correlates with the consciousness of self. The transcendental object is "the noumenon to which we refer them [objects of experience] . . . not itself an object of knowledge, but only an idea."¹⁴

¹⁰L. Busse, "Zu Kants Lehre vom Ding an sich," Zeitschrift für Philosophie, CII, 1, pp. 74-113.

¹¹E. Caird, The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant (2nd ed.; Glasgow: Maclehose, 1929) I, p. 546, note no. 1.

¹²Ibid. I, 327. ¹³Ibid. I, 291-94.

¹⁴Ibid. II, 140. Caird also considers totality of appearances to be a noumenal conception; cf. Ibid. I., 154 ff, and II, 586.

V. Cousin does not discuss transcendental object in explicit terms, but he talks of the "I think" as a representation of a "transcendental subject = x". Furthermore his discussion of the antinomies certainly implies that there is no distinction between object in itself (transcendental object) and thing-in-itself.¹⁵

James Collins and John E. Smith do not explicitly discuss transcendental object, but it is implied in their discussion of Kant that transcendental object means simply thing-in-itself. Collins states that sensation becomes an object of knowledge when it is endowed with unity and necessity by being brought within the field of the unifying relation to the transcendental unity of apperception, the ultimate ground of synthesizing the manifold into a unity of meaning.¹⁶ Collins makes a number of statements about objects which indicate quite clearly that he assumes an unknown, or "x", is noumenal,¹⁷ that a total series of conditions is simply noumenal. Collin's statements seem to imply that

¹⁵V. Cousin, The Philosophy of Kant, translated by A. G. Henderson (London: Chapman, 1854), pp. 93, 111 ff.

¹⁶James Collins, A History of Modern European Philosophy (Milwaukee: Bruce, 1954), p. 484. This is an adequate explanation of the unity of an object, but it does not explain adequately Kant's grounding of the necessity of an object. It seems to leave Kant utterly helpless against Hume's skepticism and the charge of pure subjectivism. We will discuss this point in Chapter III, esp. pp. 53-58.

¹⁷"In its own act of being, the thing remains an unknown X." Ibid. p. 489.

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transcendental object means thing-in-itself.

John E. Smith also relegates any totality of phenomena (such as "the world") to the realm of noumenal entities by implying that it would have to be the object of an intellectual intuition and is for this reason unknown.¹⁹ His argument implies that transcendental object is identical with thing-in-itself at all times in the Critique even though he does not explicitly discuss "transcendental object".

Rudolph Lehmann, A. C. Ewing, G. A. Schrader, and H. Herring all explicitly state that Kant sometimes means thing-in-itself by transcendental object and at other times does not. Lehmann recognizes a general tendency to identify transcendental object with thing-in-itself but states that even though it does mean thing-in-itself throughout The Dialectic, it means a fully subjective univocal form of object in general elsewhere.²⁰ Ewing explicitly disagrees with Norman K. Smith, stating that the meaning of transcendental object is deliberately changed by Kant at A104-110, even though he agrees that it does mean thing-in-itself in numerous other passages of the Critique. Ewing states

¹⁸"Rationalists err in applying directly to appearances the noumenal principle about a total series of conditions." Ibid., p. 498. We will discuss totality and the idea of totality in the antinomies later in this thesis and show that this quite possibly is not a noumenal element.

¹⁹John E. Smith, "The question of man," in The Philosophy of Kant and our Modern World, ed by C. W. Hendel, (New York: Liberal Arts), pp. 10, 14-15. We will discuss totality of phenomena as an object of possible experience, and thus related to sensation and not a noumenal entity later in Chapter II D of this thesis.

²⁰Rudolph Lehmann, Kants Lehre vom Ding an sich [Inaugural Dissertation - Göttingen] (Berlin: J. Sittenfeld, 1878), pp. 44-49.

that at A104-110 Kant is pointing out

...that for us the reference to an object cannot mean more than [the fact] that the representations constitute a system. For he is saying, our concept of the transcendental object considered apart from²¹ this does become the empty concept of a thing-in-itself.

Schrader explicitly says that transcendental object sometimes means thing-in-itself and sometimes means an a priori object in general which Kant tended to drop in the Second Edition.²² H. Herring states that transcendental object has a wider meaning in which it is "kein Gegenstand einer möglichen Vorstellug" and a narrower meaning "als transzendenter Gegenstand, als Ding an Sich"; in the latter sense it is the ground of all affection.²³

Hans Vaihinger also seems to identify transcendental object and thing-in-itself at times and at other times give it another meaning. At least three times in his commentary he seems to identify them with no apparent tension.²⁴ But as Herring points out,²⁵ Vaihinger seems to consider the transcendental object as an object of experience and, on

²¹A. C. Ewing, A Short Commentary on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (London: 1938), p. 101; cf. the entire passage pp. 99-102.

²²G. A. Schrader, "The Thing in Itself in Kantian Philosophy," The Review of Metaphysics, II (1949), pp. 30-44; see esp. pp. 31-33.

²³H. Herring, Das Problem der Affektation bei Kant (Cologne: 1953), Kantstudien no. 67, pp. 84-85.

²⁴Hans Vaihinger, Kommentar zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Stuttgart: W. Speman, 1881-1892), II, pp. 16, 36, 37.

²⁵Herring, op. cit., p. 82.

the other hand, the thing-in-itself as no object of possible experience but rather the fundamental transcendent object.²⁶ Vaihinger's view is complicated by the fact that he later decides that in the Opus Postumum Kant was aware that the thing-in-itself is a fiction and that any distinction in reality between phenomenon and noumenon is merely a point of view towards the object.²⁷

Finally we find that F. C. Coppleston and Hans Cohen feel that Kant explicitly distinguishes between transcendental object and noumenon in some way, but that transcendental object is not really distinct from thing-in-itself. Coppleston says that Kant distinguishes between transcendental object and noumenon in the First Edition.²⁸ He says that we arrive at what Kant means by transcendental object by abstracting from all in the object which has reference to the conditions of knowledge. Thus we arrive at a completely indeterminate unknown "x" in general, i.e., transcendental object. This, says Coppleston, is not yet the idea of a noumenon for Kant; it is merely a limiting concept and does not assume intellectual intuition as noumenon does. Coppleston says that at A253 Kant indicates that noumenon is something more than transcendental

²⁶Vaihinger, op. cit., II, 6 ff.

²⁷Hans Vaihinger, The Philosophy of "As If", Translated by C. K. Ogden (New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1925), pp. 313-18; see also p. 76.

²⁸F. C. Coppleston, S.J., A. History of Philosophy (Westminster, Md.: 1960), VI, 268.

object but then proceeds to eliminate that something more "to give an interpretation of noumenon which seems to differ not at all from his interpretation of the transcendental object."²⁹ Coppleston then says that Kant clears up this confusion in the Second Edition by carefully distinguishing between the two senses of noumenon and disregarding the use of the positive sense.³⁰ This noumenon, this thing-in-itself, this thought-unknown-something, is then merely a limiting concept.³¹ For Coppleston, then, the transcendental object is in fact the noumenon in the negative sense, and thus is the thing-in-itself considered in so far as it is not an object of our intuition.

Hans Cohen also indicates transcendental object is not noumenon in the positive sense, but rather a something in general, and that this is what Kant means by saying that transcendental object "kann nicht Noumenon heissen" at A253.³² This is to say that it is noumenon in the negative sense, and thus, is thing-in-itself. Although Cohen does indicate that the idea of transcendental object is the idea of something in general as a non-empirical object serving as the unknown ground of

²⁹Ibid., p. 269; cf. p. 268.

³⁰At B307 (268) Kant defines noumenon in the negative sense as "a thing so far as it is not an object of our sensible intuition, and so abstract from our mode of intuiting it." He defines noumenon in the positive sense as "an object of a non-sensible intuition. . . /presupposing/ a special mode of intuition, namely, the intellectual."

³¹Ibid., pp. 269-70.

³²H. Cohen, Kommentar zu Kants Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Leipzig: 1907), p. 107.

appearances and that transcendental means something other than transcendent in Kant,³³ he does not eliminate the identity of transcendental object and noumenon in the negative sense, and thus, does not eliminate the identity of transcendental object and thing-in-itself in so far as it is not an object of our intuition.

T. D. Weldon also feels that Kant attempts to make some distinction between transcendental object and noumenon. He differs, however, from Coppleston and Cohen in that he says Kant does so in talking about thing-in-itself as distinct from noumenon. Weldon says that Kant thus slips into the unfortunate habit of calling the thing-in-itself transcendental object in this context.³⁴ Therefore, Weldon identifies thing-in-itself with transcendental object. He explicitly states that thing-in-itself, or noumenon, or transcendental object form one group of entities, and phenomena another.³⁵

B. Transcendental Object Interpreted as a Purely
Subjective Element in the Knowing Process
And Distinct from the Thing-In-Itself

Ernst Marcus points out that Kant does not seem to identify transcendental object with thing-in-itself but rather seems to say that it is merely a synthetic function of the transcendental unity of appercep-

³³Ibid., pp. 66, cf. pp. 107, 132, 142, 154, 155, 168, 177.

³⁴T. D. Weldon, Introduction to Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (Oxford: 1945), p. 193. Cf. pp. 56, 171, 293-294.

³⁵Ibid., p. 92.

tion.³⁶ However, Marcus also talks of a critical thing-in-itself in Kant as the ground of appearances and the totality of appearances.³⁷

In this kind of statement he sounds a great deal like de Vleeschauwer, whom we will discuss later, and he seems to open the possibility that transcendental object could be identified with this critical thing-in-itself.

H. J. Paton also points out (1) that Kant distinguishes between transcendental object and thing-in-itself, and (2) that the transcendental object is a subjective element in our thought -- the unity which we think into appearances.³⁸ However, Paton's position is complicated by the fact that he distinguishes statements in which Kant talks about the transcendental object as an unknown "x" and statements in which he talks about it in so far as it can be known.³⁹ Paton implies that as an unknown "x" it is really the transcendent thing-in-itself.⁴⁰ Paton's position is further complicated in that he feels that the thing-in-itself is not necessary to the Analytic in any way; however, he also

³⁶Ernst Marcus, Aus den Tiefen des Erkennens: Kants Lehre von der Apperzeption (dem Selbstbewusstsein) der Kategorialverbindung und den Verstandesgrundsätzen (München: Reinhardt, 1925), pp. 114-115.

³⁷Ernst Marcus, Logik, die Elementarlehre zur Allgemeinen und die Grundzüge der transcendentalen Logik, Eine Einführung in Kants Kategorienlehre (Herford: W. Menckhoff, 1911), pp. 233-40.

³⁸H. J. Paton, Kant's Metaphysics of Experience: A Commentary on the First Half of the Kritik der reinen Vernunft (2 vols.; 2nd ed.; London: 1952), I, 421. Cf. I, 424; II, 443-44.

³⁹Ibid., II, 448. ⁴⁰Ibid., I, 424-25, 436.

recognizes that there is a great deal of difficulty involved in grounding objectivity merely upon the transcendental unity of apperception which he interprets as a purely subjective element.⁴¹

Hirschberger also finds the transcendental object to be purely subjective and distinct from thing-in-itself:

'Gegenstände' werden von ihm [Kant] nicht mehr vorgefunden, sondern vom Subjekt gesetzt, durch seine 'konstitutiven' Denkformen. Gegenstände sind nicht mehr transzendent, sondern nur transzendental.⁴²

Hirschberger also feels that the unity of apperception must have objective validity, because every transcendental synthesis must, and that Kantian objectivity rests on the lawfulness of the subjective categories.⁴³ Thus Hirschberger is forced to criticize Kant for assuming what he set out to prove in the Transcendental Deduction,⁴⁴ and further, to doubt whether any genuine objects are possible in Kant's system since the mind is really not brought into contact with anything other than itself.⁴⁵

Graham Bird states that the notion of a transcendental object is not the notion of a noumenon, not the idea of an intelligible object,

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 518-21. Cf. H. J. Paton, "La deduction transcendente dans l'oeuvre de Kant, by H. J. de Vleeschauwer" (a review), Mind 47: 233-40, esp. pp. 234-235 and p. 239. Paton's difficulty regarding the grounding of objectivity is very well taken since, after he considers transcendental object a mere subjective element. He thus has nowhere to go in order to ground objectivity, especially since he eliminates thing-in-itself completely as a possibility of doing so.

⁴²Johannes Hirschberger, Geschichte der Philosophie (Zweite Auflage; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder & Co., 1955), II, 269.

⁴³Ibid. ⁴⁴Ibid. ⁴⁵Ibid., p. 302.

but "only the idea of certain objective features of our knowledge and experience."⁴⁶ Furthermore, in the Deduction it is merely a "cipher for expressing a philosophic task yet to be completed", not "a solution to Kant's problem about the meaning of the term object . . . by relating our sensations to an imperceptible object beyond them".⁴⁷ On the other hand, he also says the appearances represent transcendental object, not things-in-themselves, but he does not develop the thought of this statement.⁴⁸

C. Transcendental Object Interpreted as a Correlate of Subjectivity and Distinct from Thing-in-Itself

E. Adickes explicitly states that transcendental object is another expression for transcendental apperception at A104-110, but also points out that it means a correlate of transcendental apperception in the Transcendental Deduction and at A250-251. He makes it clear that transcendental object is not in the realm of transcendent things-in-themselves, but is rather an undetermined idea of object in general--a representation of appearances. Thus, as an idea of objectivity, it cannot be thought in total isolation from sense data, whereas the thing-in-itself can be. However, Adickes feels the expression "transcendental

⁴⁶Graham Bird, Kant's Theory of Knowledge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, New York: The Humanities Press, 1962), pp. 79-80.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 79.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 4-5, 17.

object" was dropped in the Second Edition since it was foreign to Kant's train of thought and unnecessarily complicated the discussion in the First Edition, making the First Edition too difficult to understand.⁴⁹

For Richard Kroner the totality of objects of nature in itself (transcendental object) is merely in the realm of appearances and exists only for us (not in itself) as a correlate to man, the subject of objective knowledge.⁵⁰ However, Kroner does hold that, in respect to their supreme conditions, the objectivity of objects and the subjectivity of knowledge are identical.⁵¹

Bruno Bauch also considers transcendental object to be a correlate of the subject. For him it is not a thing-in-itself, but rather an idea which does have some real relation to thing-in-itself. He says the transcendental object is nothing other than a rule of unity in itself, not a really given thing, but a unity given through an idea to appearances--some unity of the manifold over and against apperception as a correlate of the unity of apperception.⁵²

⁴⁹E. Adickes, Kant und das Ding an sich (Berlin: 1924), pp. 97-112.

⁵⁰Richard Kroner, Kant's Weltanschauung, Translated by John E. Smith (University of Chicago, 1956), pp. 86, 96-97.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 75. Kroner's remark here re: A157=B197, where we feel Kant is referring to what he called transcendental object in the First Edition, i.e., a third something, is similar to our later discussion in Chapter III of the possibility that the objectively necessary transcendental unity of apperception may be composed of two aspects, the transcendental object on the one hand, and the original and necessary consciousness of the identity of the self on the other hand, at A108.

⁵²Bruno Bauch, Geschichte der Philosophie (Berlin: 1921), VII (Immanuel Kant), 223-24.

Bauch engages in a discussion of the transcendental unity of apperception as the ground of objectivity but has difficulty grounding the necessity of objects.⁵³ Later he points out that knowledge is knowledge of appearances whose objects are not absolute, but also points out his conviction that objectivity must be secured independently of subjectivity. Bauch further states that noumenon differs from transcendental object in that the former has only a negative use whereas the latter has a positive use as a "something = x", as an object in general correlative to the unity of apperception and through which appearances have unity. As such transcendental object is not a real object, but rather a logical function. But the fact that the transcendental object is one and the same for all appearances reveals the significance of thing-in-itself as the determining ground of the manifold syntheses; the thing-in-itself is the individuality of transcendental object just as the transcendental object is the universality of the thing in itself. Thus the transcendental object as a correlate of subjectivity grounds the unity of objects and is distinct from things-in-themselves which specify appearances as individuals.⁵⁴ Ultimately Bauch rests the independence of the givenness of objects for Kant on the thing-in-itself.⁵⁵

⁵³Ibid., p. 225. ⁵⁴Ibid., pp. 261-266.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 268. We must observe that Bauch is preparing to move into the practical works and thus may have a tendency to allow more reality to the thing-in-itself than Kant would allow in the speculative work. R. Adamson, who engages in no discussion of transcendental object, also holds that the real thing-in-itself is certainly the ground of the phenomenal world; as such it remains an unknown. Cf. R. Adamson. On the Philosophy of Kant (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1879), pp. 78, 216.

It is convenient to mention Hans Cornelius here even though he does not fit neatly into any of our general categories. He is similar to Bauch in so far as he holds that there is some real connection between transcendental object and thing-in-itself. Cornelius holds that the transcendental object is immanent, thus distinct from the transcendent thing-in-itself,⁵⁶ but also holds that object is noumenon which is not totally separated by an impassable chasm from phenomenon. The noumenon contains phenomenon as regards the necessity in phenomenon.⁵⁷ He also states that the transcendental object is thought through the understanding as an alleged object of sensible intuition which is not a pure unknown but is known to a great extent as a condition we must prescribe to things in our scientific knowledge of them.⁵⁸ He further says that transcendental object is for Kant a totality concept which has something about it which corresponds to the receptivity of sensibility and that transcendental object is, therefore, clearly shown to be of a natural origin.⁵⁹

D. H. J. de Vleeschauwer's Interpretation

H. J. de Vleeschauwer's interpretation of transcendental object deserves special treatment here because it is closely associated with his conviction that Kant ultimately makes the thing-in-itself an immanent,

⁵⁶H. Cornelius, Kommentar zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft (Erlangen: 1926), pp. 17-18.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 104-5.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 105-106.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 132.

not transcendent, entity. Thus this interpretation does not fit neatly into our three general categories.

De Vleeschauwer states that Kant minutely and carefully developed the transcendental object in the First Edition Deduction as something like a noumenon, and in more than the negative sense, since it occupied a positive role in the transcendental structure. However Kant omits this interpretation in the reorganization of the Second Edition Deduction in order to avoid the confusion between transcendental object and transcendental apperception in his more lucid presentation of the doctrine of apperception.⁶⁰

De Vleeschauwer states that in both editions of the Critique the ultimate ground of objectivity is the unity of apperception, explicitly disagreeing with the position that the object as such is the fundamental ground of the necessary unity of consciousness. De Vleeschauwer further states that the function Kant had attributed to transcendental object in the First Edition Kant attributes to the synthetic unity of consciousness in the Second Edition; there is no difference in doctrine in the two editions. The transcendental object of the First Edition is merely the formal unity of an object in general; nevertheless, in all cases the unity of apperception is the foundation of objectivity.⁶¹

De Vleeschauwer's position regarding Kant's Opus postumum is inti-

⁶⁰ H. J. de Vleeschauwer, La Deduction transcendente dans l'oeuvre de Kant (3 vols.; Paris: Leroux, 1934-37), II, 294-98, 571-88; III, 36.

⁶¹ Ibid., III, 124-125.

mately bound up with his interpretation of the transcendental object and thing-in-itself. He believes that the transcendental function of the "I think" eventually replaces the operation of transcendental object, which had oscillated in meaning between transcendent thing-in-itself and transcendental apperception in the Critique. But in the Opus Postumum the thing-in-itself is no longer transcendent, but is rather a pure representation of actuality proper to the subject.⁶² He says Kant again takes up the transcendental object, which he had dropped in 1787, in the Opus Postumum in order to consolidate his idealism. Here the transcendental object is identical with the unity of apperception as it is objectivized in its constitution of the world in experience. This objectivized unity of apperception is nothing other than the thing-in-itself in so far as it is a pure representation of actuality proper to the subject. Thus transcendental object and thing-in-itself are identical as an immanent concept of an object in general, the universal form of an object in general.⁶³ The scope of this thesis does not allow a critical examination of whether thing-in-itself is immanent or transcendent. We assume that thing-in-itself is transcendent in the Critique. Thus we have no direct comments to make regarding de Vleeschauwer's interpretation in the remainder of this thesis.

⁶² Ibid., III, 124-125.

⁶³ Ibid., III, 627, 639-40, 643, 645.

E. M. Wartenberg's Interpretation: the Point of Departure for a Possible New and More Exact Approach to Transcendental Object in the Critique of Pure Reason

M. Wartenberg carefully states that for the transcendental idealist there is a distinction between the transcendent thing-in-itself (noumenon), i.e., object of intellectual intuition, and the world of appearances. The transcendental object is therefore an undetermined something which is called "transcendental object" to distinguish it from thing-in-itself on the one hand, and from the empirical object or object of knowledge proper, on the other hand. It is a form of objectivity in general with no content. It is given expression in a pure idea of the understanding. Nevertheless, Wartenberg maintains that the representation of the transcendental object is a representation of appearances in some way. Furthermore, Wartenberg states that objects of experience are grounded in the transcendental object for the transcendental idealist.⁶⁴

Wartenberg's position can be recast in such a way that gives the following tentative interpretation of transcendental object corresponding closely to our table of contents for chapters II and III of this thesis:

Chapter II

- A. Transcendental object is distinguished from both phenomenon and noumenon.
- B. Transcendental object is in fact a third something.
- C. Transcendental object is the form of objectivity in general and is thus involved with a totality of objects.⁶⁵

⁶⁴M. Wartenberg, "Der Begriff des 'transcendentalen Gegenstandes' bei Kant und Schopenhauers Kritik desselben; eine Rechtfertigung Kants," Kantstudien V (1900-01), 145-76. See esp. 163, 165, 166, 168-70.

- D. Transcendental object is represented in a non-contentual idea and thus is an unknown.
- E. Transcendental object is a representation of appearances and thus is involved with the world of appearances, not with the realm of things in themselves.

Chapter III

Objects of experience are grounded in the transcendental object for the transcendental idealist, therefore, we must examine the function of transcendental object in the Transcendental Deduction.

In summary, in this chapter we have seen three major categories of interpretation of transcendental object: (a) that it is in some way equivalent to thing-in-itself or noumenon, (b) that it is a purely subjective entity and is distinct from thing-in-itself, (c) that it is some kind of correlate of subjectivity and yet is distinct from thing-in-itself. In addition to these three we examined (d) a position which basically identifies transcendental object with thing-in-itself, but ultimately interprets thing-in-itself as an immanent, not transcendent, entity. Finally we examined (e) the unique position of Wartenberg which will serve as the point of departure for the remainder of this thesis.

It is now our task to examine the meaning of transcendental object as it is presented by the express text of Kant. We are particularly interested in determining whether the tentative interpretation of transcendental object suggested above will withstand the test of Kant's text as a valid interpretation. In Chapter II we will concentrate pri-

⁶⁵William Wallace takes the similar position that totality is the implicit basis of all experience even though it is never actually present. W. Wallace, Kant (Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1902), pp. 180 ff.

marily on texts from The Analytic exclusive of the Transcendental Deduction. We will examine the text of the Transcendental Deduction in Chapter III in order to clarify further the meaning of transcendental object and to discover the function of the transcendental object in the grounding of the categories. Finally, in Chapter IV we will examine the text of the Dialectic to complete our understanding of the meaning of transcendental object and to discover its function in Kant's resolution of reason's natural conflict with itself.

CHAPTER II

A TEXTUAL EXAMINATION OF WHAT KANT MEANS BY TRANSCENDENTAL OBJECT

In Chapter I a review of Kantian commentators indicated that the great majority fall into three general categories: (a) those who interpret transcendental object as identical with thing-in-itself, (b) those who identify it with subjectivity in some way and distinct from the thing-in-itself, and (c) those who interpret transcendental object as some kind of correlate of mere subjectivity and in some way distinct from thing-in-itself. We will defer until Chapter III any direct discussion of the relationship between subjectivity and the transcendental object.

In this chapter we are primarily concerned with establishing the general meaning of transcendental object by an examination of Kant's express text. The general direction of this examination is suggested by M. Wartenberg's interpretation of transcendental object as we presented it in Chapter I. We will search for Kant's meaning in terms of the following questions: (a) Is transcendental object distinct from both thing-in-itself (noumenon) and phenomenon as such? (b) Is it some kind of third something? (c) Is it involved with totality in some way? (d) What does transcendental object have to do with synthesis and the "=X", or the unknown? (e) Is the transcendental object involved with the world of appearances in some way?

A. Phenomenon vs. Noumenon vs. Transcendental Object

One of the most explicit and clear cut statements that transcendental object is not the same as thing-in-itself (noumenon) is contained in The Ground of the Distinction of all Objects in General into Phenomena and Noumena in the First Edition of the Critique.

Here Kant is more properly concerned with the distinction between phenomena and noumena; he does not engage in a comprehensive and exact exposition of the doctrine of transcendental object. He mentions transcendental object as it is relevant to the distinction between phenomena and noumena. Later we shall be enabled to see that his statement regarding transcendental object is consistent as it appears throughout both editions.

Kant states that understanding refers all appearances to a something, as the object of sensible intuition. This is a something = x, i.e., "transcendental object = x", which, as a correlate of the unity of apperception,¹ serves only for the unity of the manifold in sensible intuition. It is an "= x" because

it is not itself an object of knowledge, but only the representation of appearances under the concept of an object in general - a concept which is determinable through the manifold of these appearances.²

¹This description, as correlate, by itself, does not present a complete notion of the doctrine. This is clear from our discussions of the proper relationship between transcendental object and the unity of apperception at pp. 51-52 of this thesis.

²A251 (208).

Kant goes on to say:

The object to which I relate appearance in general is the transcendental object, that is, the completely indeterminate thought of something in general. This cannot be entitled noumenon; for I know nothing of what it is in itself, and have no concept of it save as merely the object of a sensible intuition in general, and so as being one and the same for all appearances.³

This text speaks for itself. Transcendental object is not thing-in-itself (noumenon). It is a pure object which is the same for all appearances.⁴ It is our thesis that this is a thoroughly mature critical doctrine, maintained in both editions.

We must admit that Kant's deletion of this passage in the Second Edition is, at first glance, a compelling temptation to contend that he might have felt in 1787 that its doctrine was not really as compatible with his system as he thought it was in 1781. It is understandable that this omission could be taken as an indication that "transcendental object = x" means thing-in-itself. But the preponderance of evidence is against this view. Kant is totally silent as to any retraction regarding transcendental object. Furthermore, he upholds all doctrines essential to transcendental object in the Second Edition.

We feel that Kant dropped this passage in the Second Edition to maintain his consistent avoidance of the term "transcendental object" until after the doctrine of the Paralogisms is presented. This omission of the term is primarily for pedagogical, not doctrinal, reasons. The

³A253 (271).

⁴There could be no clearer confirmation of the doctrine at A108-9 (137). See p. 58 of this thesis.

Paralogisms clears the air of any possible improper employment of the idea of transcendental object, which is so essential to The Analytic, but which only confuses the argument when "= x" leads one to judge precipitously that transcendental object is noumenon. Furthermore, since Kant has avoided use of this term in the Second Edition Analytic, it would not be consistent for him to use the term here where he is trying to clarify the proper distinction between phenomena and noumena, as this distinction is relevant to the Analytic.⁵

At the very end of the passage at A248=B305 Kant makes it quite clear that the categories, since they are merely the form of the employment of the understanding, are not by themselves capable of determining any object. Following immediately is the section developing an explicit doctrine of transcendental object, part of which we have quoted above. This was dropped in the Second Edition in favor of the following exposition of the distinction between phenomenon and noumenon.

Kant points out that we are subject to the illusion that since the categories are not grounded, as regards their origin, in sensibility, they "allow of an application extending beyond all objects of the senses."⁶ But the categories, simply modes of combining the manifold, signify no object at all apart from intuition wherein the manifold is given. The fact that the mode in which we intuit sensible objects (phenomena) is distinguished from the object in itself gives the illusion

⁵ Compare N. K. Smith, Commentary, pp. 406-7, re: A248-49.

⁶ B305 (266).

that we posit this nature in itself as opposed to phenomena, and that it exists as a purely intelligible entity. The question then arises whether the categories have meaning applicable to such intelligible entities (noumena), i.e., whether we know them.⁷

It is a fact, that the understanding validly forms a representation of an object in itself at the very same time that it denominates an object mere phenomenon. But, due to an ambiguity, the understanding comes to represent itself as also being able to form concepts of such objects as totally outside appearances. Since the only concepts the understanding yields are categories, the understanding supposes that it at least thinks the object in itself (as totally outside appearances)⁸ through these categories. But in this manner understanding is misled by the "object's" character as something in general outside our sensibility. It is misled to take that which is in fact an entirely indeterminate idea of an intelligible entity for a determinate idea of a real entity, which we can know through the understanding in some manner or other.⁹

But the fact is that knowledge of a noumenon in the positive sense of the word, i.e., as an object of an intellectual intuition, is quite

⁷B306 (267).

⁸As such it is not really object, but thing-in-itself (noumenon).

⁹I have substituted my own paraphrase of the text as it appears at p. 277 of Werke since I find Smith's translation (pp. 267-8) of this difficult passage at B306-7 to be extremely difficult to understand.

impossible. It is impossible since the categories have no meaning, except in relation to the synthesis of intuition in space and time. We can only speak of noumenon in the negative sense, i.e., as not being an object of sensible intuition, and as totally abstracted from even our mode of sensible intuition.¹⁰

This exposition in the Second Edition is a much better, and even a more accurate presentation of Kant's authentic doctrine regarding noumenon than that which appeared in the First Edition. This alone is sufficient reason for Kant to substitute the new exposition. We need not assume that Kant did so because he was dissatisfied with his doctrine of transcendental object. Kant not only does not destroy the doctrine in this Second Edition formulation; he in fact confirms most of its basic elements: the categories' ground as to origin is not in sensibility; the understanding forms a representation of an object in itself; the understanding cannot apply any determinate concepts to such an object; this object possesses the character of being in general outside our sensibility (though referring to possible sense experience, and thus not totally outside all appearances); this object is not to be taken as the object of any intellectual intuition (thus is not noumenon in the positive sense). Furthermore, since noumenon in the negative sense is totally abstracted from even our mode of sensible intuition, we see that transcendental object cannot be noumenon even in the negative sense,

¹⁰ B307-309 (268-70).

since "transcendental object = x" refers to "the object of a sensible intuition in general."¹¹

B. The Amphiboly--Transcendental
Object a Third Something

Kant again introduces his doctrine of transcendental object in The Amphiboly as a very clear and very important confirmation of his mature critical doctrine.¹² Here Kant is not simply telling his pre-critical belief in thing-in-itself, even though this object-in-itself cannot be conceived in the categories; Kant does not show himself to be skeptical about his own doctrine of transcendental object as has been contended.¹³

The following passage is apparently of major importance for those who take transcendental object to mean thing-in-itself (noumenon):

Understanding accordingly limits sensibility, but does not thereby extend its own sphere. In the process of warning the latter that it must not presume to claim applicability to things in themselves but only to appearances, it does indeed think for itself an object in itself, but only as transcendental object, which is the cause of appearance and therefore not itself appearance, and which can be thought neither as quantity nor as reality nor as substance, etc. (because these concepts always require sensible forms in which they determine an object.) We are completely ignorant whether it is to be met with in us or outside us, whether it would be at once re-

¹¹ A253 (271).

¹² A277=B333 (286), A287=B343 to A289=B345.

¹³ Cf. N. K. Smith, op. cit., p. 412 Re. A288=B344-45. Cf. also 214-15.

moved with the cessation of sensibility, or whether in the absence of sensibility it would remain. If we are pleased to name this object noumenon for the reason that its representation is not sensible, we are free to do so.¹⁴

We must take care to examine this text in the light of its larger context. At first glance Kant seems to be equating transcendental object with thing-in-itself¹⁵ since he says we cannot apply any of the categories to this object and that we may name it noumenon if we so please. It is only when we look before and after this exact text that we see Kant himself pointing out the folly of such an interpretation.

At A287=B343 (293) Kant states that thought in pure employment on its own without any aid from sensibility is without an object. We could not call a noumenon an object for this pure employment of the understanding because noumenon signifies only a problematic concept of an object for an intuition and understanding quite different from ours.¹⁶

"The concept of the noumenon is, therefore, not the concept of an object."¹⁷ It is simply a problem unavoidably bound up with the problem of whether or not there are any objects entirely disengaged from sense intuition.¹⁸ Such "objects" cannot be absolutely denied simply because

¹⁴ A288=B344-45 Underlining supplied for emphasis of the crucial elements which would seem to contradict our thesis.

¹⁵ cf. N. K. Smith, Commentary, p. 214. Smith here again states that transcendental object, as employed in The Amphiboly, means thing-in-itself.

¹⁶ A288=B343-44 (293).

¹⁷ A288=B344 (293). M. Wartenberg points out that for us the noumenon simply is not an object at all. Cf. M. Wartenberg, op. cit., p. 166.

we have no determinate concepts of them since they are not given in intuition. But, nevertheless, they cannot be asserted to be objects for our understanding.¹⁹ At this point we have arrived at the crucial text quoted above.

In the text quoted Kant simply states that the understanding, as it warns sensibility that it does not extend to things-in-themselves, does indeed think an object in itself, but only as transcendental object, not as some noumenal "object". What is more, this object is not mere appearance, since it is the ground (Ursache) of appearance (as necessary object).²⁰ In other words, transcendental object is neither mere appearance nor thing in itself; it is a third something, namely, pure object. He goes on to say that the categories in no way can be applied to this transcendental object and that we are totally ignorant of what this object is in itself. The transcendental object equals x, i.e., is unknown. Kant is thoroughly consistent here. He then ironically admits that critics may call this object noumenon simply because its representation is not sensible, if they so please.²¹ But he immediately adds in the next sentence that such a noumenal "object" would be of no

¹⁸A288=B344 (293).

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰The object is not given and known as necessary object in mere appearance. Its necessity as object appears only when it is represented in apprehension as grounded in transcendental object = x.

²¹Edward Caird, A Critical Account of the Philosophy of Kant (Glasgow: James Maclehose, 1877), pp. 499-500. Caird with admirable critical scrutiny of the matter, is not lead to an interpretation of Kantian "skepticism", but rather, points out that our "liberty" here is a dubious sort of liberty.

service except to limit sensible knowledge. It would open a space which we could fill neither with pure understanding nor with possible experience.²²

But Kant's authentic idea of transcendental object does not leave a space which cannot be filled with possible experience. The idea of transcendental object applies validly to the possible totality of synthesis of all appearances in intuition. Since this totality of synthesis can never be accomplished, the transcendental object always remains unknown or "= x".

In the very next sentence Kant reinforces his sarcasm by pointing out that the Critique does not allow the understanding to create a new field of objects beyond appearances in an intelligible world. To do so would be to employ the understanding contrary to its vocation, to make "objects, that is, possible intuitions, conform to concepts, not concepts to possible intuitions, on which alone their objective validity rests."²³

When we employ the understanding in its proper vocation and think the pure object, transcendental object, we apply this idea ("concept") with objective validity to the possible totality of synthesis in intuition of all appearances in experience. It is by sheer illusion that we assume this pure object to be a thing-in-itself which is independent of possible intuition. In such illusion we are employing understanding contrary to its vocation; we make the object, i.e., possible intuition, conform to the concept. The only relationship between transcendental object and

²²A288-89=B345 (293-4).

²³A289=B345 (294).

noumenon is the illusory leap from the transcendental object in the world of appearances (even though distinct from mere appearances) to the noumenon in a purely intelligible world.²⁴

There is one other employment of the term transcendental object in The Amphiboly. At A277-78=B333-34, Kant is discussing matter. He makes it quite clear that matter is not even among the objects for pure understanding. It should thus be apparent that transcendental object does not mean thing in itself when Kant says:

. . .transcendental object on the other hand, which is granted the role of the ground of this appearance which we name matter, is a pure something of which we would understand nothing, which is what it would be for us, even if someone might be capable of expressing it to us. For we can understand only that which brings with it, in intuition, something corresponding to our words.²⁵

We would not be able to understand such an object, even if someone else could express it to us. In order to understand (know) an object, we must, of ourselves, have an accomplished intuition of it. We know we can have no such an accomplished intuition of the totality of appearances at any time. Therefore we cannot at any time know transcenden-

²⁴Contrast with Bruno Bauch's interpretation of the relationship between thing-in-itself and transcendental object. Contrast also Hans Cornelius' interpretation. Cf. supra, pp. 14-16.

²⁵This is my translation of the text at A277=B333 (Werke, p. 297): "das transcendente Objekt aber, welches der Grund dieser Erscheinung sein mag, die wir Materie nennen, ist ein blosses Etwas, wovon wir nicht einmal verstehen würden, was es sei, wenn es uns auch jemand sagen könnte. Denn wir können nichts verstehen, als was ein unsern Worten korrespondierendes in der Anschauung mit sich führet."

tal object, the ultimate ground of that appearing object which we name matter.

C. A Note on the Significance of Completeness and
Totality in the Critique of Pure Reason

In his Introduction to the Critique Kant makes the extremely important point that a complete system of the philosophy of pure reason is possible because it studies not the nature of things, which is inexhaustible, but rather it studies the nature of the a priori knowledge of understanding, which passes judgement on the nature of things. This faculty of understanding is limited and thus is the object of a possibly complete study.²⁶

A demand for the completeness of his system is of major importance to Kant in his critical philosophy. At the beginning of the Transcendental Analytic Kant points out that the completeness of the Analytic can be guaranteed

only by means of an idea of the totality of the a priori knowledge yielded by the understanding; such an idea can furnish an exact classification of the concepts which compose that totality, exhibiting their interconnection in a system.²⁷

This idea of totality must be sharply distinguished from the idea of a sum total of possibility, an idea of omnitudo realitatis, which, as Kant states in The Ideal of Pure Reason, is the concept of a thing-in-itself as completely determined, i.e., a transcendental ideal which

²⁶ A11=B25 - A16=B30 (58-62).

²⁷ B89-90=A65 (102).

serves as a basis for the complete determination of everything that exists. This is an idea of God.²⁸

This distinction between an idea of totality of phenomena and an idea of total possibility (ideal of pure reason) becomes clearer in Kant's criticism of the physico-theological proof. Kant states that the proof fails in part because it tries to ascribe some magnitude to a cause supreme in respect to the world when we "are not acquainted with the whole content of the world"²⁹ still less do we know how to estimate its magnitude by comparison with all that is possible."³⁰

Kant explicitly distinguishes degrees of objective reality.³¹ The categories are of course closest to objective reality. The ideal is furthest removed from objective reality since it is "an individual thing, determinable or even determined by the idea alone."³² The idea, however, is in a middle position. For ideas,

no appearance can be found in which they can be represented in concreto. They contain a certain completeness to which no possible empirical knowledge ever actually attains.

²⁸ A571-76=B599-604 (488-91).

²⁹ The reason the whole content of the world is unknown is, of course, that an advance to totality in the empirical order is impossible. Thus Kant is forced to say that the physico-theological argument is really no different than the ontological because it is in part based on the idea which applies validly to the possible total regress in the synthesis of intuition; an idea which produces no knowledge however. Cf. A628-30=B657-58 (523).

³⁰ A622-23=B650-51 (519).

³¹ A567-68=B595-96 (485).

³² Ibid.

In them reason aims only at a systematic unity, to which it seeks to approximate the unity that is empirically possible, without ever reaching it.³³

We must further distinguish between an idea of possible total regress in the empirical synthesis and such an idea as the idea of the simple nature of the thinking self. The former is an idea found in the transcendental a priori synthetic proposition, "The world of nature is a unified totality of necessity." As Kant observes in "The Discipline of Pure Reason",³⁴ the proof of such a proposition cannot go beyond the concept of its object without special guidance from outside the concept. The proof of such a proposition "proceeds by showing that experience itself, and therefore the object of experience, would be impossible without a connection of this kind."³⁵ On the other hand, the proof of an assertion of pure reason, like that of the simple nature of the thinking self, is faced with unavoidable difficulty, since the notion of absolute simplicity cannot be immediately related to a perception.³⁶

In a word, our reason can employ as conditions of the possibility of things only the conditions of possible experience; it can never proceed to form concepts of things quite independently of these conditions. Such concepts, though not self-contradictory, would be without an object.³⁷

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ A782-3=B810-11 (621).

³⁵ A783=B811 (621).

³⁶ A784=B812 (622).

³⁷ A771=B799 (613).

Thus Kant must say:

A transcendental hypothesis, in which a mere idea of reason is used in explanation of natural existences /Naturdinge/, would really be no explanation. . .³⁸

But he must also say:

As regards the absolute totality of the ground of explanation of the series of these causes, such totality need suggest no difficulty in respect of natural existences /Weltobjekte/; since these existences are nothing but appearances, we need never look to them for any kind of completeness in the synthesis of the series of conditions.³⁹

We need not look to mere appearances for any kind of completeness, but this completeness, this totality which grounds the series of causes, is guaranteed as valid for reason, even though it is not productive of knowledge, by the fact that experience and objects of experience are in fact possible, but would be impossible without such an idea of totality of unity and necessity in the world of natural objects to ground their very objectivity in experience. We shall see Kant ground the valid objective employment of the categories in this idea of the totality of phenomena, i.e., the idea of transcendental object, in the Transcendental Deduction.

D. The Unknown or "= x" and the Nature of Synthetic Judgements

Kant first speaks of an Unknown or "= x" in his Introduction to the Critique.⁴⁰ Kant here refers to meaning which unknown within the

³⁷A771=B799 (613). ³⁸A772=B800 (614). ³⁹A773=B801 (615).

⁴⁰A9=B13 (50-51). Norman Kemp Smith notes here that "das Unbekannte = x" is substituted in B for "das x".

subject of a proposition or judgement which is nevertheless united with that subject by means of the predicate in a synthetic judgement. This Unknown or " $= x$ " points out how synthetic judgement differs from analytic judgement in that it reaches outside the meaning contained within the concept of the subject in order to add to this knowledge the new, hitherto unknown or " $= x$ ", meaning contained within the concept of the predicate; similarly, the idea of transcendental object is synthetically applied to a possible but never actual totality in the synthesis of all appearances in a single experience. The transcendental object remains forever unknown not because the totality is noumenal,⁴¹ but rather because the totality of synthesis in intuition remains forever a mere possibility, never an actuality.

At the beginning of the Transcendental Logic Kant says "Our nature is so constituted that our intuition can never be other than sensible: that is, it contains only the mode in which we are affected by objects."⁴² Thus intuition gives us only a mode of being affected. Intuition alone does not give us object known as such. Object, as such, must be thought by the understanding.

This is not to say that knowledge occurs in isolation from intuition.

⁴¹Körner says that "the idea of the completion of an unlimited process is that of a non-phenomenon, intelligible or thing in itself." Kant (Baltimore: Penguin, 1955), p. 117. Körner does not explicitly discuss transcendental object and apparently does not suspect any further subtleties in Kant's position on totality. E. Caird, J. Collins, and J. E. Smith also consider a totality of phenomena to be noumenal. Cf. pp. 4-6 of this thesis.

⁴²A51=B75 (93).

Kant makes it quite clear that knowledge of an object is validly possible only when thought of an object is in synthetic union with the intuition in which the object is given.⁴³

Furthermore, in the "Conclusion of the Transcendental Aesthetic", Kant states that through his doctrine of the pure a priori intuitions we know that a priori synthetic judgements "can never extend beyond objects of the senses; they are valid only for objects of possible experience."⁴⁴ It is important to note that Kant says "possible experience". It is also important to note that this limit of validity is due to the fact that a purely intellectual intuition is not possible for us. Our intuition is sensible, thus not original, and thus not capable of giving us the existence of an object. Our mode of intuition is dependent upon the existence of an object and is possible only if our faculty of representation is affected by that object.⁴⁵

Pure a priori knowledge of object is possible in the application of pure concepts of objects in general to pure intuitions in which objects in general are given, but not known.⁴⁶ This knowledge of an object is the result of an a priori synthetic judgement in which a unity unknown to the manifold of pure intuition is applied to that intuition by pure concepts of the understanding, (i.e., categories).

⁴³A51=B75 (93). ⁴⁴B73 (90-1).

⁴⁵A50, B72-73, (90-91).

⁴⁶A50-51=B74-75 (92). This pure a priori knowledge is distinguished from knowledge in which the concept and intuition are empirical. This latter knowledge of objects is possible only a posteriori.

Kant must ground the validity of this synthetic application of unity to the manifold of intuition. He must justify this synthetic thinking of objective unity into the given manifold of intuition by the understanding. This unity of object is not known within the manifold of intuition. Thus we will not be able to find the ground for applying such unity in an examination of the nature of the synthesis of intuition. We will have to examine the nature of the spontaneous presentation of synthesis of the understanding. Kant makes it quite clear that we are justified in an examination of the role of the understanding in the process of knowledge, as separate from the role of intuition or sensibility, even though we fully recognize that only through the union of the two does knowledge of objects arise.⁴⁷

Cassirer points out that mere sensation is receptive and passive, and as mere sensation it is not an awareness of objects. His important observation points up the fact that objects must be thought, not intuited, even though this thought is empty and not at all productive of knowledge unless it is applied to sense intuitions. Our mode of intuition is dependent upon the existence of objects, but this existence is not known as object in mere intuition.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ A51-52=B75-76 (93).

⁴⁸ Contrast H. W. Cassirer. Kant's First Critique. (New York: Macmillan, 1954), pp. 27-28, 42-43, 225-26, 234, 236. But contrast this with his statement that things-in-themselves are only problematical; cf. pp. 227, 230. Edward Caird, H. Herring, B. Bauch and R. Adamson also assume that phenomena are grounded in things-in-themselves in some way; cf. pp. 7 & 16 of this thesis.

But we must take care not to assume that Kant's position is that appearances are grounded in things-in-themselves, and that our pre-supposition of the reality of thing-in-itself guarantees the reality of sensible phenomena.

We know that the reality of sensible phenomena cannot be guaranteed for speculative reason by something which is outside the realm of speculative reason. Things-in-themselves are definitely not valid objects for speculative reason; they are entirely outside the realm of the valid employment of speculative reason. The guarantee for the reality of sensible phenomena, and the ground of appearances as unities or objects (not as mere appearances which are no more than the manifold of intuition) must be one and the same thing, namely, "transcendental object = x". The synthetic character of their unity, i.e., the application of unity to sensible phenomena as mere appearances which is outside their mere manifoldness in themselves, demands a ground for its validity. We shall see Kant say that this ground is "transcendental object = x". Thus "transcendental object" must not mean thing-in-itself because speculative reason is not competent to deal with things-in-themselves.

Kant himself makes this quite clear. In his Second Preface Kant says, ". . .the object is to be taken in a twofold sense, namely as appearance and as thing in itself."⁴⁹ As thing-in-itself we know nothing of object with pure speculative reason. Thus such things as freedom

⁴⁹Bxxvi (28).

and morality as they are in our souls, or in the soul of others, in themselves, are not valid objects for pure speculative reason. We must, however, remember that these will come forth as valid objects of pure reason in its practical employment.⁵⁰ "I have. . . found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith."⁵¹ The "transcendental object = x" is not, however, an object of faith; it is an object of speculative reason.

A concept such as Causality (an objective order of necessity in nature) and the idea which serves as its ground (the idea of "transcendental object = x"), will apply to an object only in the first sense, "namely as appearance".⁵²

E. The Analogies--Transcendental Object
in the World of Appearances

In the Analogies Kant is largely concerned with the proper application of the various categories to various perceptions to produce valid objective knowledge. He is not primarily concerned here with the grounding of the a priori validity of the categories themselves. Thus we find little or no development of his doctrine of transcendental object as such.

However, Norman Kemp Smith's remark that the term transcendental object, as it appears in the Analogies, can mean only thing-in-itself⁵³ affords an excellent occasion to see the importance of Kant's authentic

⁵⁰Bxxviii-xxiv (28-29). ⁵¹Bxxx (30).

⁵²Bxxviii-Bxxix (28-29). ⁵³N. K. Smith. Commentary, p. 214.

meaning of the term. This is important for both properly translating the text and properly following Kant's line of argument.

Kant points out that no one will grant him that the manifold of a house is successive just because his apprehension of the manifold is successive. This makes him immediately aware that

as soon as I extend my idea of object to include its transcendental significance, the house is not at all a thing in itself, but on the contrary it is merely an appearance, that is, a representation whose transcendental object is unknown.⁵⁴

To conclude that transcendental object here means thing-in-itself is to oversimplify Kant's meaning. Kant has indicated immediately prior to this passage that things-in-themselves are apart from the representations through which they affect us.⁵⁵ Here transcendental object is not apart from the representation but is to serve as the key to determine how necessary connection in time can be shown to belong to appearances in themselves in spite of the fact that they are not things-in-themselves, and in spite of the fact that their representation in apprehension is always successive. For example, he must show that the house, as an appearance, is not successive in its parts even though our representation of its appearance in apprehension is successive. As a mere appearance, i.e. representation whose transcendental object remains

⁵⁴This is my translation of the text at A190-91=B235-6. "Nun ist aber, so bald ich meine Begriffe von einem Gegenstande bis zur transcendentalen Bedeutung steigere, das Haus gar kein Ding an sich selbst, sondern nur eine Erscheinung, d.i. Vorstellung, deren transcendentaler Gegenstand unbekannt ist;" (Werke, p. 228).

⁵⁵A190=B235.

unrecognized, such a feat is impossible. But when "transcendental object = x" is recognized to be the a priori ground of the a priori objective validity of the application of a category such as "Community" to the manifold of the house, then we can show that the manifold of the house is necessarily not successive.⁵⁶

Thing-in-itself (noumenon) could obviously never serve as such a ground. Quite obviously then, transcendental object could not mean thing-in-itself (noumenon).⁵⁷ It must in fact be intimately involved with the world of appearances, even though it is distinct from mere appearances.⁵⁸

To summarize, in Chapter II we have seen textual evidence to support an interpretation of transcendental object as follows: (a) Even though the transcendental object is something in general outside

⁵⁶This doctrine thus makes the arguments from A191=B236 thru A211=B256 (220-223) much more lucid.

⁵⁷We should not confuse a concept such as causality of nature, or any of the validly applied categories, with something like purposiveness in nature, which is "a particular concept a priori, which has its origin solely in the reflective judgement." Kant, The Critique of Judgement, translated by J. H. Bernard (London: Macmillan, 1931), pp. 19-20. This purposiveness is neither of nature nor of freedom. "It ascribes nothing to the object (of nature), but only represents the peculiar way in which we must proceed in reflection upon the objects of nature in reference to a thoroughly connected experience, and is consequently a subjective principle (maxim) of judgement." (ibid. p. 24). This sort of principle serves as a link between the speculative and practical employment of pure reason, but has nothing to do with ascribing objective unity to appearances nor with the ultimate grounding of this objectivity.

⁵⁸Cf. our discussion of E. Adickes on this point, p. 14 of this thesis.

our sensibility, it is not noumenon, i.e., thing-in-itself. Since transcendental object is an object in general outside our sensibility, it cannot be identified with mere phenomena, which are sense representations. (b) The transcendental object, since it is not an object of either sensible intuition or intellectual intuition, and since it is not totally removed from our mode of sensing an object, is neither mere phenomenon, nor noumenon in either the positive or negative sense. Thus the transcendental object must be a third something, namely, the pure form of objectivity in general and the ground of the objective necessity in appearances. (c) The idea of transcendental object represents a possible totality in the synthesis of sensible representations (phenomena). (d) The idea of transcendental object, therefore, can never be validly applied to an actual sense representation since the totality always eludes actual sensation. Thus the transcendental object must remain forever an " $= x$ ", an unknown. Nevertheless, the idea of transcendental object (e) can be validly applied to the possible totality in the synthesis of appearances. In fact, we shall see in Chapter III of this thesis that this application of the idea of transcendental object to the possible totality of phenomena (appearances) is the ultimate a priori justification for thinking objectivity synthetically into the manifold of mere appearances. It is now our task in Chapter III to examine how transcendental object functions in this grounding of objectivity in synthetic a priori judgements.

CHAPTER III

THE ROLE OF TRANSCENDENTAL OBJECT IN THE TRANSCENDENTAL ANALYTIC

In Chapter II an examination of Kant's text revealed that transcendental object can be interpreted as a third something between mere phenomenon and noumenon, namely, the pure form of objectivity in general. We found the transcendental object to be represented in an idea which is validly applied to a possible totality in the synthesis of phenomena in intuition. We found, further, that the transcendental object remains an "= x" or unknown because the synthesis in intuition can never be actually completed.

Thus far we have found a workable definition of transcendental object which is definitely contradictory to the first general category of commentators outlined in our Chapter I. It is now our task to examine Kant's text in order to see how transcendental object, as we have interpreted it, functions in the grounding of the objectivity of our knowledge. Since this function is bound up with the transcendental unity of apperception we should also be able to determine what relationship transcendental object has to the second and third general categories of interpretation outlined in Chapter I according to which transcendental object was conceived as a purely subjective entity, or merely a correlate of the knowing subject, or some combination of the two.

The crucial grounding of the objectivity of the synthetic a priori judgements, which produce knowledge of objects in the knower, occurs in the Transcendental Deduction. We will begin our textual examination of the function of transcendental object in the Deduction by following the exact order of Kant's subtle argument as it occurs explicitly in the Transcendental Deduction of the First Edition. We will find that the argument is a very compact and continuous whole, but does progress through the following recognizable stages: (a) a statement of the problem as the necessity to justify the application of the categories to phenomena; (b) the relationship of the general synthetic unity and necessity of any object as such to the unity of apperception and the transcendental object; (c) the argument proper of the Deduction, grounding the necessary unity of consciousness, the transcendental unity of apperception, objectivity as such, and thus, the application of the categories by the understanding.

After this close examination of the First Edition Deduction it will be necessary to examine the doctrine of the Deduction in the Second Edition since Kant omits any explicit use of the term "transcendental object" in this recasting of the deduction. Thus we are concerned (d) with the doctrine of transcendental object and the doctrine of the Second Edition Deduction. Finally, (e) we will examine the Analytic of Principles, which is substantially the same in both editions, in order to see if there is any confirmation of the role of transcendental object (doctrinally, if not by the term itself) in the Deduction as proposed by Kant in 1787.

A. Kant's Statement of the Problem of the Transcendental Deduction

In the section on The Principles of Any Transcendental Deduction Kant states that only through the representation which is a priori determinant of the object is it possible to know anything as an object at all. Only in so far as there are representations in the understanding which are determinant of object in general is it possible to think objective necessity (e.g. necessary order in nature, causality). But the synthetic representation of intuition is determinant only of empirical object; this representation must of necessity relate to and be determined by an a priori concept of object in general for us to think it as object of experience at all. Representations in intuition by themselves would be foreign to one another and thus knowledge would be impossible if there were no a priori concepts of objects in general, i.e., categories.¹

Kant recognizes at this point that he must justify the validity of this application of the categories to the manifold of intuition in order to guarantee the validity of any knowledge of objects in experience. This difficult and complex justification is developed in the A Deduction explicitly in terms of his doctrine of "transcendental object-²x", and its relation to the transcendental unity of apperception.

¹A92-97=B124-130.

²A97-110 (130-137). Prichard, on the other hand, comments that Kant's argument here tacitly ignores his own theory of knowledge, that the object proper, i.e., the thing-in-itself is unknowable; Kant's Theory of Knowledge (Oxford: 1909), p. 179.

B. The Synthetic Unity and Necessity of Object--
Its Relationship to the Unity of Ap-
perception and Transcen-
dental Object

Kant begins by outlining the three-fold synthesis: (1) apprehension in intuition, (2) reproduction in imagination, and finally (3) the synthesis of recognition in a concept. This last synthesis is the synthesis into pure concepts of the understanding, i.e., categories. Kant points out that

our thought of the relation of all knowledge to its object carries with it an element of necessity; the object is viewed as that which prevents our modes of knowledge from being hapazard or arbitrary, . . . in so far as they our modes of knowledge/ are to relate to an object, they must necessarily . . . possess that unity which constitutes the concept of an object.³

Thus we see that the concept of an object for Kant is characterized by necessity and unity, or more simply an object is a necessary unity.

But this necessary unity is unknown (an "x") to the manifold of our sense representations; it is "something that has to be distinct from all our representations."⁴

This necessary unity, this "x" which corresponds to the manifold of our representations, this object which is nothing to us as sense intuitors since it is an "x", i.e. unknown to the manifold of sense representation⁷, makes necessary "the formal unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold of representations."⁵

³A104-105 (134-5). ⁴A105 (135). ⁵Ibid.

The production of the synthetic unity in the manifold of intuition is a prerequisite for knowledge, but this synthetic unity is itself impossible unless

. . . generated in accordance with a rule by means of such a function of synthesis as makes the reproduction of the manifold a priori necessary, and renders possible a concept in which it is united. . . This unity of rule determines all the manifold, and limits it to conditions which make the unity of apperception possible. The concept of this unity is the representation of the object = x which I think through the predicates. . . ⁶

Thus we see that the object as such makes the formal unity of consciousness necessary and this unity of consciousness in turn makes the reproduction of the manifold a priori necessary and renders the concept (category) possible. The category is then a specific representation of the object = x, or is a specific manifestation of our representation in thought of object in general.

It is important to note in this discussion that Kant is distinguishing object as such from sense representations as such and is also distinguishing object as such from the formal unity of consciousness, which makes the reproduction of the manifold a priori necessary and renders possible (grounds) the categories, but which is, in turn, made necessary by object as such. Thus far we see that the categories, if they are to apply validly a priori to the manifold of sense representation and thus result in knowledge of object, are grounded in the formal unity of consciousness, which the object as such renders necessary. Thus we can see that this formal unity of consciousness must itself be a necessary

⁶A105 (135). Underlining supplied for emphasis (except the phrase unity of rule).

unity, it must be objective itself, or it must be included in objectivity in some way. If this were not so, our application of the categories to the manifold of sense representation would be merely a subjective compulsion or habit. Thus Hume's scepticism would conquer Kant. Kant must truly ground the application of the categories in something other than mere subjective structure or psychological compulsion if his critical philosophy is to succeed at all. It is right here in the Transcendental Deduction that he is claiming to accomplish this very task by showing that the formal unity of consciousness, the unity of apperception, is a necessary unity, i.e. is objectively grounded.

C. Kant's Grounding of the Necessary Unity of Consciousness in Transcendental Apperception and the Ultimate Grounding of Both in Transcendental Object--the Argument of the Core of the Deduction

Kant states:

All necessity, without exception, is grounded in a transcendental condition. There must, therefore, be a transcendental ground of the necessary unity of consciousness in the synthesis of the manifold. . .and consequently also of the concepts of objects in general [categories], and so of all objects of experience, a ground without which it would be impossible to think any object for our intuitions; for this object is no more than that something, the concept of which expresses such a necessity of synthesis.⁷

This transcendental ground is "no other than transcendental apperception."⁸ It is distinguished from empirical apperception, or inner sense which is merely empirical and always changing. In fact, the necessary unity of consciousness "cannot be thought as such through

⁷A106 (135-6). ⁸A106 (136).

empirical data."⁹ To render it valid "there must be a condition which precedes all experience, and which makes experience itself possible",¹⁰ namely the transcendental unity of apperception.

This transcendental unity of apperception constitutes a connection according to laws of all representations of all possible appearances which can stand along side one another in one experience.¹¹

Thus, the

. . .original and necessary consciousness of the identity of the self is. . .at the same time a consciousness of an equally necessary unity of the synthesis of all appearances according to concepts, that is, according to rules, which not only make them necessarily reproducible but also in so doing determine an object for their intuition, that is, the concept of something wherein they /i.e. all possible appearances/ are necessarily interconnected.¹²

Thus for Kant, the transcendental unity of apperception in so far as it is the objectively necessary ground of all possible experience,¹³ involves two aspects. It involves on the one hand the original and necessary consciousness of the identity of the self, and on the other hand, the necessary unity of the synthesis of all possible appearances according to rules which determine an object for their intuition, i.e. the concept of something wherein all possible appearances are necessarily interconnected. It is this latter aspect of the transcendental unity of apperception which makes the former aspect an original and necessary

⁹A107 (136). ¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹A108. My translation. ¹²A108 (136-7).

¹³Cf. our discussion of R. Kroner at p. 14 of Chapter I in this thesis.

consciousness of the identity of the self rather than a mere subjective association. Without this latter aspect the objectivity of all our knowledge would fall victim to Hume's scepticism. It seems that this latter aspect is very close to what Kant means by "transcendental object = x".¹⁴

We first recognize that we are the same subject applying the various categories to the manifold of various syntheses of intuition in a necessary manner. This is the necessary consciousness of the identity of the self. But in this recognition is necessarily included a recognition of the possibility of a complete experience of the totality of all the manifold of intuition.¹⁵

At this point Kant tells us that we are now in a position "to

¹⁴It seems here that Kant's text would almost justify our stating that the transcendental unity of apperception, in so far as it is the objectively necessary ground of all possible experience of objects, is in fact constituted of the original consciousness of the self and the necessary unity of synthesis of all appearances, rather than that it merely involves both these elements. However, we feel that this interpretation would possibly be too extreme to hold up univocally throughout the Critique, especially in the face of those texts where transcendental object is presented as some sort of correlate of self, even some sort of correlate of the transcendental unity of apperception (in abstraction from its necessity). E. Adickes seems to indicate this involvement of transcendental object with the transcendental unity of apperception of some degree; Kant und das Ding an sich, pp. 97-112. Refer also to our discussion of H. J. de Vleeschauwer and R. Kroner in Chapter I of this thesis.

¹⁵This possible totality includes not only our intuition of our own identical subject (as an object of inner sense intuition), but also the intuition of the non self (as an object of outer sense intuition). Furthermore, this recognition includes a recognition that the transcendental object must remain an "x" (unknown) because in order for it to be knowledge the understanding would have to apply concepts of unity to this manifold of appearances in an accomplished intuition.

determine more adequately our concept of an object in general."¹⁶ Kant then gives a lucid exposition of what he means by transcendental object:

Appearances are the sole objects which can be given to us immediately, and that in them which relates immediately to the object is called intuition. But these appearances are not things in themselves; they are only representations, which in turn have their object--an object which cannot itself be intuited by us, and which may, therefore, be named the non-empirical, that is transcendental object = x¹⁷

Kant further states:

The pure concept of this transcendental object, which in reality throughout all our knowledge is always one and the same, is what can alone confer upon all our empirical concepts in general relation to an object, that is, objective reality. This concept cannot contain any determinate intuition, and therefore refers only to that unity which must be met with in any manifold of knowledge which stands in relation to an object.¹⁸

Kant goes on to say that this relation to object is nothing but the necessary a priori unity of consciousness without which there would be no objective necessity.¹⁹ This necessary a priori unity of consciousness is a great deal more than the mere subjective unity of self we would encounter if the transcendental unity of apperception did not

¹⁶A108 (137).

¹⁷It appears that the fact that transcendental object cannot be intuited is what leads to the general interpretation that it is equivalent to thing-in-itself, which could be intuited only by an intellectual intuition. The fact is that transcendental object = x could not be intuited at all even by an intellectual intuition, if such were possible, because transcendental object is the necessary unity of all possible appearances in one experience. As such it is thought by reason as the sole ground of the objectivity of all possible appearances.

¹⁸A108-9 (137). ¹⁹A109-10 (137-8).

include its objective grounding in transcendental object =x. Kant actually says:

This relation is nothing but the necessary unity of consciousness, and therefore also of the synthesis of the manifold, through a common function of the mind, /i.e. transcendental unity of apperception/ which combines it in one representation. Since this unity must be regarded as necessary a priori--otherwise knowledge would be without an object--the relation to a transcendental object, that is, the objective reality of our empirical knowledge, rests on the transcendental law, that all appearances, in so far as through them objects are to be given to us, must stand under those a priori rules of synthetic unity whereby the interrelating of these appearances in empirical intuition is alone possible. In other words, appearances in experience must stand under the conditions of the necessary unity of apperception, just as in mere intuition they must be subject to the formal conditions of space and time.²⁰

We recognize the impossibility of ever actually accomplishing a total synthesis of the total manifold in intuition, both as regards to space and time,²¹ and thus the impossibility of applying categories to either the possible total synthesis in the intuition of self (this the illusion of paralogism), or of the non-self (this is the dialectical illusion of antinomy). What is more, we recognize that our idea of a total unity of consciousness has valid objective employment only as applied to the possible totality of synthesis in the manifold of all intuition (both of inner and of outer sense).

Thus the self as encountered in the transcendental unity of apperception remains forever unknown as a total objective unity even though

²⁰ A109-110 (137-8). Underlining supplied for emphasis.

²¹ This becomes explicitly patent in Kant's formulation of The Antinomies.

we recognize that every accomplished and possible synthesis of the manifold in intuition and every accomplished and possible application of the categories to this synthesis of the manifold in intuition must have the ground of its objective validity in this unity of the self encountered in the Transcendental unity of apperception. But this grounding is not recognized to be in an objectively necessary unity of all consciousness unless the unity of self is recognized to be involved in the total unity of a possible accomplished totality of all syntheses of all the manifold in intuition, regarding time and space, to which an idea of complete, utter and total unity of object is applied. This total unity of object is transcendental object. But since this possible accomplished totality of synthesis in all intuition patently will never be completed, the objectivity of our idea of this unity cannot ever be applied to an accomplished corresponding synthesis in intuition. Thus the idea of total object (as possibly given in the possible total synthesis of intuition in both time and space), though validly applied to a possible totality of experience, is not applied to an accomplished totality. Thus the object remains not knowledge, i.e., unknown, i.e., = x, i.e., Transcendental object = x.²² This object

²²A108-111 (136-38). H. J. Paton observes that the fact that we are not at any moment aware of all appearances of all objects does not alter the fact that every given appearance must be capable of being combined in one consciousness with all other appearances; cf. Kant's Metaphysics of Experience (New York: Macmillan, 1936), II, 459. This entire passage, pp. 437-475, is a profitable exposition of Transcendental Deduction. Cf. Graham Bird, Kant's Theory of Knowledge (New York: The Humanities Press, 1962), pp. 4-5, 17. Bird observes that appearances do not represent things in themselves but rather represent transcendental object. But he does not develop this statement.

is something over and above the unknown objective self as encountered in the transcendental unity of apperception. This unknown self, as an object, is included in the totality of object in all intuition, both inner and outer. The unity of consciousness of self, in and of itself, is not yet a validly grounded encounter of the self as a necessary unity. To be a necessary unity, i.e. and objective necessity possibly²³ given in a possible totality of inner sense intuition it must be thought in relation to the idea of a complete totality of sense intuition, both as regards inner sense and as regards outer sense. Thus Kant says, "The possibility, indeed the necessity, of these categories rests on the relation in which our entire sensibility, and with it all possible appearances, stand to original apperception."²⁴

Furthermore he says that the thorough going affinity of appearances is easily explainable by the fact that "All possible appearances, as representations, belong to the totality of a possible self-consciousness."²⁵ This self-consciousness is necessarily a unity and a priori certain. Furthermore, it "must enter into the synthesis of all the manifold of appearances . . ."²⁶ Kant has again pointed out the intentional nature of the transcendental unity of apperception; it involves not only unity

²³Note that the unity of self as an object can never be actually given in an accomplished intuition due to the impossibility of ever actually intuiting the totality of time itself.

²⁴A111 (139). Underlining supplied for emphasis.

²⁵A113 (139-40). Underlining supplied for emphasis.

²⁶A114 (140).

or identity of the conscious subject, but also a necessary synthetic relation to the possible totality of synthesis in the manifold of all possible appearances. The transcendental unity of apperception can thus ground the objective reality of our empirical knowledge of objects because its own objectivity is grounded in "transcendental object = x".

Thus Kant is not succumbing to any radical subjectivism when he says that nature directs itself according to our subjective ground of apperception, since this "subjective" ground is also "trans-subjective" in that the transcendental unity of apperception as a necessary unity includes and has its objectivity grounded in transcendental object.

Kant re-iterates and enlarges these very same points in Section 3 of the A Deduction.

There must . . . be an objective ground . . . upon which rests the possibility, nay the necessity, of a law that extends to all appearances . . . This objective ground of all association of appearances I entitle their affinity. It is nowhere to be found save in the principle of the unity of apperception, in respect of all knowledge which is to belong to me. According to this principle all appearances, without exception, must so enter the mind or be apprehended, that they conform to the unity of apperception.²⁷

The bipolar involvement of the subject in the transcendental unity of apperception is further made evident when Kant states:

The abiding and unchanging 'I' (pure apperception) forms the correlate of all our representations in so far as it is to be at all possible that we should become conscious of them.²⁸

²⁷A122 (145). Underlining supplied for emphasis.

²⁸A123 (146).

Kant also states that the necessary unity of nature could not be an a priori certain unity in the connection of appearances

. . . if there were not subjective grounds of such unity contained a priori in the original cognitive powers of the mind, and if these subjective conditions . . . were not at the same time objectively valid.²⁹

Finally the bipolar involvement in transcendental (necessary) unity of apperception again becomes apparent in the "Summary" of the A Deduction. Kant states that the

. . . unity of possible consciousness also constitutes the form of all knowledge of objects; through it the manifold is thought as belonging to a single object.³⁰

The "single object" is evidently a reference to transcendental object, the concept of which is one and the same in meaning throughout all our knowledge.

D. Transcendental Object and the Second Edition Deduction

It could be surmised that Kant dropped his doctrine of transcendental object in the Second Edition Deduction because he found it to be untenable. We must say, with what we feel to be much greater justification, that Kant dropped his use of the term transcendental object in the B Deduction, but developed the very same doctrine without the terminology which may have been confusing in the First Edition of the Cri-

²⁹ A125-6 (147). Underlining supplied for emphasis.

³⁰ A129 (149-50).

tique.³¹ The fact is that Kant extensively uses the terminology of transcendental object later in the Second Edition.³² But he does so only after he feels that his doctrine as it is promulgated in the Paralogisms will safe guard the doctrine of transcendental object from being misunderstood to be a doctrine of an unknown thing-in-itself (noumenon) considered as an objective correlate of a noumenal self.

The only inconsistency regarding transcendental object in the two editions of the Critique is the change of terminology. The doctrine remains the same. The terminology apparently was changed in the Second Edition to prevent apparent doctrinal inconsistencies from arising in the mind of his readers.

In the B Deduction³³ Kant again points out that the Understanding is the faculty of knowledge. Knowledge is knowledge of an object.

³¹ On this point see T. D. Weldon. Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (Oxford: 1958), p. 293. Weldon says that it seems inconceivable that simply because the chief passages of A, in which transcendental object appeared, were dropped in B, should cause it to be explicitly identified with thing in itself, or should cause us to think that almost all mention of it is suppressed in B.

³² Kant allows the term to remain at B236=A191 in the Second Analogy. It also remains in the Amphiboly at A277-78=B333-34 and at A288=B344. Smith consistently condemns the appearance of the term in these places as a failure on Kant's part to properly recast the Second Edition. N. K. Smith's Commentary, pp. 214-15, 412. We present our views on the appearance of the term in these places in our chapters on the Analogies and the Amphiboly. The term does not regain extensive employment until the Transcendental Dialectic where the Paralogisms provide sufficient clarification that transcendental object cannot mean any noumenal entity.

³³ B130-B169.

Object is "that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united".³⁴

Unification of all representations demands a necessary unity of consciousness. Thus, necessary unity of consciousness alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object. The necessary synthetic unity of consciousness is an objective condition of all knowledge.³⁵

The term transcendental object is not employed here, but the transcendental unity of apperception is entitled objective, and is distinguished from a mere subjective unity of consciousness, which is a determination of inner sense only.³⁶ This distinction is equivalent to the statement in A that transcendental object = x is the sole ground of the objectivity of the self as encountered in transcendental unity of apperception, and has to do not only with the syntheses of inner sense (time), but of outer sense (space) also; that only the pure concept of transcendental object can confer objective reality upon all our empirical concepts in general.³⁷

The Categories are again functions of judgement, in which the manifold of intuition is necessarily subjected to the original unity of apperception.³⁸

The necessary synthetic unity of apperception, as distinct from mere inner sense (i.e., as grounded in and included in the idea of trans-

³⁴B137 (156). ³⁵B138 (156). ³⁶B139 (157).

³⁷cf. A109-10 (137-8). ³⁸B139 (157).

cendental object = x),

. . . is the source of all combination, applies to the manifold of intuitions in general, and in the guise of /unter dem Namen/the categories, prior to all /accomplished/ sensible intuition, to objects in general /as objects of possible experience/³⁹

In the transcendental unity of apperception, as necessary and objective, I am conscious of myself not as mere appearance (that regards my inner intuition only) nor as I am in myself (this would be the object of an intellectual intuition, i.e. intuition of noumenon). This consciousness is a representation, a thought, not an intuition. It is an idea of the total unity of the spontaneous application of unity to the possible totality of the manifold in intuition. Since it is an idea which applies to appearances, at least possible appearances in sense intuition, it is quite patently not a concept of thing-in-itself (noumenon). Nevertheless it is not knowledge of an object. In order for this idea to be knowledge, such a total synthesis of all the manifold of intuition would have to be actually accomplished by the subject. But we quickly recognize that time, the limiting condition of inner sense, allows us only to intuit the combination of the manifold according to the relations of time. Kant's consistent doctrine is that we cannot intuit time itself, i.e., the totality of time, thus a totally ac-

³⁹B154 (166). This seems to be quite close in meaning to Paton's observations regarding B141 (cf. A126) where Paton finds that understanding implies that in all judgement there is an a priori synthesis. H. J. Paton. Kant's Metaphysics of Experience (New York: Macmillan, 1936), p. 515; cf., pp. 469-71, 510-513.

completed synthesis of the manifold of intuition remains always a task to be accomplished.⁴⁰ Thus our idea of a total and necessary unity of the self never becomes knowledge because it can never be applied to an accomplished total synthesis in all intuition. But the idea as expanded to include the necessary unity of all experience, is validly applied to a possible total synthesis in all intuition, and thus it is validly objective. What this object is in itself (note we say object in itself, not thing-in-itself or noumenon) we cannot know. Kant could, if he felt it would not confuse his readers, very consistently call this unknown object transcendental object = x, in which the a priori objective validity of the categories is ultimately grounded. The doctrine presented here⁴¹ is the very same as that of the A Deduction minus the employment of the term "transcendental object = x."

Probably the most destructive effect following from a misunderstanding of Kant's doctrine of transcendental object is the vacuum it leaves in one's interpretation of the scope and meaning of the Deduction. N. K. Smith says "The concept of an object consists in the thought of a manifold so determined in its specific order and groupings as to be interpretable in terms of the categories of substance and causality."⁴² This is of course a thoroughly incomplete idea of object for Kant. Smith does go on to point out that the deduction rests upon an interpretation

⁴⁰ On this point see G. Bird, op. cit., p. 79.

⁴¹ cf. B154-159 (166-169).

⁴² N. K. Smith. Commentary, p. 250.

of the unity of apperception⁴³ and that valid application of categories to empirical objects rests upon relation of intuitions of these empirical objects to the unity of apperception.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, he apparently does not think that objectivity as such rests upon the transcendental unity of apperception as it is objective, i.e. necessary, in the total unity of experience of objects, i.e. transcendental object = x, i.e. the possibility of the subject's total and complete regress of synthesis of all appearances in experience. We feel, however, that there is, for Kant, a possible complete experience to which the idea of totality of object is properly applied, but an experience never actually complete. Since the total experience always remains a task to be accomplished the transcendental object must always remain an "= x", i.e. remain unknown. This does not, however, prevent the idea of totality of object from being validly applied to a possible total experience. Thus, as an idea, it is a valid guarantee of the a priori validity of the application of categories to objects in experience.

E. The Analytic of Principles--Confirmation of the Role of Transcendental Object in Transcendental Deduction

In the Principles of Pure Understanding Kant points out that it is the very possibility of experience that gives objective reality to the a priori mode of knowledge. The possibility of experience, in turn, rests on "a synthesis according to concepts of an object of appearances in general [i.e. categories]"⁴⁵

⁴³Ibid. p. 251.

⁴⁴Ibid. p. 252.

⁴⁵A156=B195 (193).

But in addition, this synthesis, this objective knowledge must

. . . fit into . . . context according to rules of a completely interconnected (possible) consciousness. . . conform to the transcendental and necessary unity of apperception . . . Apart from this relation⁴⁶ synthetic a priori principles are completely impossible,⁴⁷ [They are impossible] because they then have no third something, namely pure object, in which the synthetic unity can ground its concepts' objective reality.⁴⁸

Kant goes on to say that synthetic a priori judgements are possible

. . . when we relate the formal conditions of a priori intuition, the synthesis of imagination and the necessary unity of this synthesis in a transcendental apperception, to a possible empirical knowledge in general. We then assert that conditions of the possibility of experience in general are likewise conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and that for this reason they have objective validity in a synthetic a priori judgement.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ i.e. their conformity to, and grounding in, the transcendental and necessary unity of consciousness.

⁴⁷ A156-57=B195-96 (193). Kant's text continues here without any break, except a comma, into the next sentence which is my own translation, of the text as it appears at Werke, p. 200. It is important to emphasize the unity of thought in this passage rather than break it into two sentences which could appear to be not very closely united.

⁴⁸ "weil sie kein Drittes, nämlich reinen Gegenstand haben, an dem die synthetische Einheit ihrer Begriffe objective Realität dartun könnte." (Werke, p. 200.) Compare (193) where Smith reads "keinen Gegenstand" with Grillo for "reinen Gegenstand". "Pure object", as here employed by Kant, has immediate and direct reference to the fact that it is a necessary unity of apperception which grounds the very possibility of synthetic a priori principles. This necessity must rest on a third something, namely pure object, i.e., transcendental object = x.

⁴⁹ A158=B197 (194).

This is very clearly a formulation of the same doctrine which was called the doctrine of transcendental object in the A Deduction and which was again formulated in the B Deduction without the use of the term transcendental object. The very possibility of experience rests upon the valid application of the categories to the manifold of appearances in general. This valid application in turn is grounded in a proper conformity to the transcendental and necessary unity of consciousness. This unity, as necessary, i.e., objective, is grounded in a third something, namely, pure object. This pure object is patently identical with transcendental object = x.⁵⁰

In summary, in Chapter III we have seen the textual evidence to support the view that transcendental object is at the very core of the Transcendental Deduction in the grounding of the objectivity of our knowledge. We found (a) that the problem of the Transcendental Deduction (namely, how can we justify the synthetic application of the categories to the manifold of intuition) is ultimately solved in terms of the doctrine of transcendental object. We also discovered that Kant, in the argument for this justification in the First Edition Deduction, found (b) that the general synthetic unity and necessity of object as such is related to both the unity of apperception and the transcendental object in a complex and necessary manner. The synthetic thinking of unity and necessity into the manifold of appearances, i.e., the appli-

⁵⁰ Cf. our discussion above of the text at A108-9 where the pure concept of transcendental object is said to be the sole guarantee of the objective reality of our empirical concepts.

cation of the categories by the understanding, the knowing of objects, rests upon some kind of synthetic unity in the very manifold of appearances. But this synthetic unity in the manifold of appearances is generated in accordance with a rule which a priori necessitates the reproduction of the manifold in the knower, and, at the same time, renders the category (in which the manifold is unified as a known object)

possible.⁵¹ This rule, this unity of rule, limits the manifold to conditions which make the unity of apperception possible.⁵² The idea of this unity of rule is the idea of the object = x in general, i.e., the transcendental object = x. We saw Kant go further, saying (c) that the transcendental object makes the transcendental unity of apperception an objectively necessary unity. Thus the general synthetic unity and necessity of the objects of our knowledge actually rests on the unity of apperception in so far as that unity is a necessary unity. The general unity and necessity of the objects, as such, of our knowledge rests indirectly and ultimately on the transcendental object, since the transcendental object ultimately grounds the necessity of the transcendental unity of apperception.

It will be profitable for us, at this point, to evaluate the second and third general categories of commentators outlined in Chapter I. It seems that each is correct, to a degree, and incorrect, to a degree. In the present chapter we have seen (in sections B and C) that transcen-

⁵¹ Cf. our discussion above re: A105 (135) on p. 49 of this thesis.

⁵² Ibid.

dental object is involved in the necessary unity of the subject, and yet, also some kind of correlate of subjectivity. On the one hand, the unity of apperception is not properly the transcendental unity of apperception unless grounded in, or possibly even constituted partially of (as we noted on p. 53 of this thesis), the transcendental object. On the other hand, Kant definitely talks of the transcendental object as a correlate of apperception or unity of subject. Kant's authentic doctrine seems to demand, on the one hand, that transcendental object be intimately associated or bound up with the unity of subject in apperception as an objectively necessary unity of subject, but on the other hand, that it also be a non-subjective correlate of subjectivity involved with the trans-subjective totality of appearances in order to guarantee real objects for the knower.

In this chapter we have also seen evidence in the First Edition Deduction that it is in the transcendental object that Kant ultimately grounds the necessary unity of consciousness, the transcendental unity of apperception, objectivity as such, and thus, the synthetic application of the categories to the manifold of experience by the understanding.

We have further seen that Kant (d) did not retract the doctrine of transcendental object in the second Edition Deduction even though he does not employ the term "transcendental object". On the contrary, Kant develops the argument of the Second Edition Deduction in substantially the same manner as he did in the First Edition. This role of the doctrine of transcendental object in the Deduction of both editions (e) is borne out by confirmatory evidence in The Analytic Of Principles,

which is substantially the same for both editions.

Now that we have seen the function of transcendental object in the Analytic, it becomes our task to examine its role in the Dialectic, where its relationship to the illusion of pure reason and the resolution of pure reason's self-conflict should become apparent. A better understanding of the role of transcendental object in the Dialectic will help us understand better the critical philosophy of Kant and the role of the transcendental object in that philosophy.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE OF TRANSCENDENTAL OBJECT IN

THE TRANSCENDENTAL DIALECTIC

In Chapter III we saw evidence that the doctrine of transcendental object plays a crucial role in the very core of the Analytic, the Transcendental Deduction.

It is now our task to examine the role of the transcendental object in the Transcendental Dialectic where Kant employs it explicitly and extensively in both the First and Second Editions. We must discover what role, if any, the transcendental object plays in Kant's resolution of reason's natural conflict with itself. We must also determine whether the resolution of this conflict enables us to understand better the very nature of Kant's critical philosophy and the role of transcendental object in that philosophy. We will approach these general questions by clearly defining the exact nature of the illusion in (a) The Paralogisms, (b) the mathematical antinomies, and (c) the dynamical antinomies. In each of these cases, we will also carefully determine exactly how Kant mitigates and resolves the illusion.

A. The Paralogisms--the Illusion of Objectivity in the Subject's Synthesis of Thought

If we were to assume that in the Paralogisms Kant believed himself to have proved that the self as a self-conscious being is a genuinely

noumenal existence, we would quite consistently hold that it is for this reason that Kant was forced to hold that the categories were "inadequate to express its real determinate nature."¹ But Kant gives a different reason for the inadequacy of the categories here.

Smith, in his Commentary incorporates his interpretation of the Transcendental Deduction into his exposition of the significance of the Paralogisms.² Smith points out that the key to the proper treatment of the illusion of paralogism is first supplied by the results of the Transcendental Deduction. Thus his own interpretation of the full results of the Deduction causes him to criticise Kant for not showing that "the Paralogisms rests upon a failure to distinguish between appearance and reality."³ Smith immediately goes on directly to criticise Kant for tracing the cause of the fallacy of the first three Paralogisms "solely to a failure to distinguish between the logical and real application of the categories".⁴

The fact is that there is no need for Kant to ask his readers to distinguish between "appearances and reality" to point out properly the illusion of the Paralogisms. We have indicated above that the illusion of the Paralogisms is the application of the categories to the possible total regress in the synthesis of intuition of the self. This is a purely logical employment of categories. It is not a real employ-

¹N. K. Smith, Commentary, p. 328. See the entire treatment on pp. 327-29.

²Ibid., pp. 260 ff. This transfer is also apparent at pp. 455 ff.

³Smith, Op. cit., p. 457. ⁴Ibid.

ment; it is, in fact, an impossible employment, since the categories can be applied only to accomplished syntheses in intuition. What is more, to apply the categories to the unity of consciousness as an objective, i.e., necessary unity, is to force the category to determine the transcendental object, that which grounds its very own valid employment. All this patently is an impossibility in the system of critical philosophy. Kant's procedure in the Paralogisms is absolutely consistent with his mature critical philosophy and its central doctrine of transcendental object.

Kant, as we have seen, does not consider a noumenal existence to be an object at all for pure speculative reason if reason is maintaining its proper critical employment. Any noumenal aspects of the self are irrelevant to the question of why the categories cannot in any way be applied to the objective existence of the self as encountered in the transcendental unity of apperception. Smith, however, is forced to state: "The patchwork character of the Critique, the artificial nature of the connections between its various parts, is nowhere more evident than in this section on the paralogisms."⁵

It should be evident to us that the categories are neither adequate nor applicable to the self as a self conscious being. First the categories are limited to distinct aspects of reality such as substance or cause. Any given category is thus limited in its application, at least

⁵Smith, ibid., p. 457. Further evidence of Smith's constant holding to this interpretation is found in his discussion of the "Notion of Self as a Necessary Idea of Reason" at pp. 473-8.

by the aspects of reality to which the other categories apply. We could therefore not find any one category adequate to apply to the unity of the self as a self conscious being, who is aware of his relation to all reality. Secondly, the a priori validity of the categories as applicable to any object is grounded a priori in the transcendental unity of apperception as objective, i.e., as grounded in and involved with transcendental object. It would be absurd for the category to be able to express the real determinate nature of that which makes possible the category's very application. The a priori validity of the category's employment is itself grounded in the necessary unity of consciousness in experience. If the category were able, in turn, to determine the ground of its valid employment, it could also extend itself to any kind of possible object totally independent of any kind of intuition. This would in fact place an impardonable and destructive fallacy at the very heart of critical philosophy.

Kant, in fact, again displays his thoroughgoing and consistent holding to the doctrine of transcendental unity of apperception as objective, i.e., as grounded in and included in transcendental object.⁶

The natural illusion of the Paralogism, like all illusion of pure reason consists in treating the subjective condition of thinking as being knowledge of the object.⁷ In the Paralogisms pure reason occupies itself only with the absolute totality of the synthesis of the subjective

⁶A396-404; cf. B406-411. ⁷A396 (361-62).

conditions of a thought in general. Herein pure reason occupies itself solely with that condition which is unconditioned.

Since, in thought in general, all relation to any object is disregarded, the synthesis of the conditions of a thought in general is not objective at all. The illusion of the Paralogisms is to mistake this pure synthesis of thought within subject for a synthetic representation of an object.⁸

Nevertheless, the "I" which accompanies all thought, the "I" in the proposition "I think", is represented as an object which I think as the object "I" along with its unconditioned unity. But I cannot know what this "I" is because in this highly general problem there is no intuition to which any a priori knowledge could correspond. Yet the illusion that we are able to apply attributes such as substance to this "I" persists even though it now has been recognized to be highly suspect.⁹

But we see the error in the application of such attributes when we see the origin of these attributes. They are nothing other than the pure categories, which only think unity into sense representations

⁸A397-98 (362). Kant's statement here that the synthesis of the conditions of a thought in general is not objective at all reinforces our conviction that objectivity cannot be grounded solely in the unity of the thinking subject, but rather in the necessary transcendental unity of apperception which derives its necessity in its synthetic relationship to the "trans-subjective" possible totality of synthesis in intuition of phenomenal object--in its relationship to the "transcendental object = x".

⁹A398-99 (362-63).

to determine an object for them. These attributes cannot be applied to the "I" because there is no object given in intuition which would allow the category to yield the concept of an object. Such predicates as "simple" must be given in the intuition of the simple thing itself in appearance.¹⁰ If such predicates are not so given, there is no knowledge whatsoever of object.

Thus when we say that the soul is simple substance, and have no intuition to apply this concept to, we are merely saying it is a subject in itself not the predicate of anything else, nothing more.¹¹

The natural illusion that the thinking self knows the absolutely unified self through those very categories which express absolute unity is due to the following reason:

Apperception is itself the ground of the possibility of the categories; which on their part represent nothing but the synthesis of the manifold of intuition, in so far as the manifold has unity in apperception. Self consciousness in general is therefore the representation of that which is the condition of all unity, and itself is unconditioned. We can thus say of the thinking 'I' (the soul), which regards itself as substance, as simple, as numerically identical at all times, and as the correlate of all existence, from which all other existence must be inferred, that it does not know itself through the categories, but knows the categories, and through them all objects, in the absolute unity of apperception,¹² and so through itself. Now it is,

¹⁰ A399-400 (363-64). Note that Kant speaks here of "the thing itself" and "the thing itself in appearance". He says nothing about a thing-in-itself (noumenon) here.

¹¹ A400-01 (364).

¹² This absolute unity must be that which is grounded in pure object, transcendental object. See our discussion above regarding A108-9 and A158-9=B197.

indeed, very evident that I cannot know as an object, that which I must presuppose in order to know any object, and that the determining self (the thought) is distinguished from the self that is to be determined (the thinking subject) in the same way as knowledge is distinguished from its object. Nevertheless there is nothing more natural and more misleading than the illusion which leads us to regard the unity in the synthesis of thoughts as a perceived unity in the subject of these thoughts. We might call it the subreption of the hypostatized consciousness.¹³

A paralogism such as simplicity or substantiality is thus the result of the illusion that we have, in fact, perceived the unity of subject; whereas we have, in fact, only represented this unity as an object belonging quite validly to a possible total experience, which remains forever a task to be completed. Thus, in the Second Edition formulation, Kant finds that when we recognize that the self unity is not any noumenal existence, then critical philosophy stands utterly unshaken.

Smith, however criticizes Kant for mistakenly believing himself to have proved the self-conscious self to be a noumenal existence, at B422 of the Paralogisms. Smith contends that Kant's position here is open to criticism on all sides, that Kant introduces a hitherto unrecognized form of existence, an alternative reality which is neither appearance nor thing-in-itself.¹⁴

The fact is that Kant's position here is no different than we have seen him formulating throughout the Critique. Kant is, at this point, returning to the language of the First Edition. He expects his reader

¹³ A401-02 (365). ¹⁴ N. K. Smith, Op. cit., pp. 330-31.

to be prepared to understand his employment of these terms without prejudicing the proper understanding of the critical character of the entire Critique.

Kant points out, at this point, that rational psychology is the result of mistaking the unity of consciousness, which underlies the categories, for an intuition of the subject as object, and thus applying the category of substance to this unity. Such an employment of the categories is thoroughly invalid because the unity of subject is in itself a prerequisite for the application of the categories.

Kant actually says that

. . . the "I think" expresses an indeterminate empirical intuition, i.e., perception, . . . An indeterminate perception here signifies only something real that is given, given indeed to thought in general, and so not as appearance, nor as thing in itself (noumenon), but as something that actually /in der tat (Werke. p. 356) might better be translated "as a matter of fact" exists, and which in the proposition, 'I think' is denoted . . . I do not mean to say . . . that the 'I' in this proposition is an empirical representation. On the contrary, it is purely intellectual /ist sie rein intellektuell (Werke, p. 356)/; because belonging to thought in general. Without some empirical representation to supply material for thought, the actus, 'I think', would not indeed, take place; but the empirical is only the condition of the application or of the employment, of the pure intellectual /intellektuellen, (Werke. p. 356)/ faculty.¹⁵

Thus we see that the absolute unity of apperception which is a purely intellectual representation does validly apply to an object which is given in an intuition, an indeterminate empirical intuition. It is not given as an actually accomplished total regress of synthesis of

¹⁵note "a" B422-23 (378).

appearances in experience. As a representation it is not empirical, but purely intellectual. But it has objective validity as an idea because it applied to a possible totality of regress in synthesis of appearances in experience. The absolute unity and identity of the "I" is objectively valid and real because it is grounded in and included in the "transcendental object = x."¹⁶

This "I" cannot be a substance because it is not an accomplished synthesis of appearance in experience. Thus no category can validly be applied to it.

This "I" cannot be mere appearance because then it would be merely manifold with no unity. In such a situation, understanding would not be able to function at all; any and all knowledge would be an impossibility.

This "I" cannot be a thing-in-itself (noumenon) because it must ultimately be referred to possible experience, and because it is in fact the sine qua non¹⁷ of all unity in appearances, and of all valid objective necessity. This "I" is referred to possible experience in its representation of a possible total wholeness, or completion, of the regress in synthesis of all appearances in experience. It is included in (or includes) and grounded in that third something, pure object, the "transcendental object = x".

¹⁶Thus to say "transcendental object = x" is simply an object correlate to subject in the transcendental unity of apperception does not seem to be quite accurate; See N. K. Smith, Commentary, p. 322.

¹⁷of. A. C. Ewing, op. cit., pp. 40-71.

Kant has, in the Second Edition, formulated this doctrine in its utter fullness. The doctrine is certainly not suppressed here, it is presented with far greater clarity and force than it was in the First Edition Paralogisms. We must understand Kant properly here if we are to fully understand Kant's mature critical doctrine.

B. The Mathematical Antinomies--the Illusion of Givenness in the Totality of the Phenomenal World

Regarding each employment of the term transcendental object in the Antinomies, Smith says:

In all these cases there is not the least uncertainty as to its denotation. It is taken as equivalent to the thing in itself, and is expounded as a necessary ingredient in the consciousness of our subjective representations as noumenally grounded.¹⁸

We are now in a position to see that this interpretation, which is representative of those who identify transcendental object with thing-in-itself, is entrapped in transcendental illusion regarding transcendental object.

The term transcendental object appears at A478-9=B506-7 (431-2). Kant points out that it is only regarding cosmological objects that transcendental philosophy is justified to demand a sufficient answer bearing on the constitution of the object.¹⁹ This is so because cosmo-

¹⁸N. K. Smith, op. cit., p. 215.

¹⁹A478=B506 (431-32). Kant argues that transcendental philosophy was not justified in even asking the question of what might be the constitution of the object in the Paralogisms. In the Paralogisms the question referred to the transcendental subject of all inner appearances. This subject is not itself an appearance and is not given as an object.

logical ideas alone can "presuppose their object, and the empirical synthesis required for its concept, as being given."²⁰ The question then arising out of cosmological ideas refers only to whether or not this synthesis can be carried to utter completion, so as to contain absolute totality of object, a totality which is no longer empirical since it cannot actually be given in any experience. Nevertheless, such a thing is an object of possible experience, not a thing-in-itself. Thus the answer to the transcendent cosmological question, the question of The Antinomies, must be found in the idea. Reason cannot push its responsibility onto the unknown object [transcendental object = x] because our only question "is as to what lies in the idea, to which the empirical synthesis can be expected merely to be approximate."²¹

Since it is this anticipated given object which is "transcendental object = x", and since this object can only be expected to approximate

The categories in no way met with the conditions required for their application in the Paralogisms. There was no object to be perceived. Thus the question as to what the object constitution might be was entirely "null and void". A478-9=B506-7 (432), especially note "a".

²⁰ A479=B507 (432).

²¹ ". . . sondern was in der Idee liegt, der sich die empirische Synthesis bloss nähern soll". A479=B507 (Werke, p. 452). Smith's translation "as to what lies in the idea, to which the empirical Synthesis can do no more than merely approximate" is correct here. However, I wish to bring out more forcefully the impact of "bloss nähern soll". Kant is here thinking of the expectation or anticipation of the given object in a possible total regress of all appearances in intuition.

cosmological ideas, not to correspond exactly to them,²² our question regarding cosmological objects, the objects of The Antinomies, must be found entirely within the cosmological ideas.²³

Here we see that Kant explicitly states that transcendental object is not thing-in-itself, that it remains unknown, even though it applies to intuition, because the empirical synthesis can never be accomplished. Kant's meaning is so intensely compressed in this short passage at A478-79=B506-7 that we cannot possibly understand him if we do not understand his authentic doctrine of transcendental object which underlies his discussion here.

The term transcendental object appears again at A494-95=B522-24 (441-2). Here Kant says that we may entitle the purely intelligible ground²⁴ of appearances in general "transcendental object" not to posit a thing in itself²⁵, but simply to have something to correspond

²² Note that we have hit upon the root of the dialectical illusion of cosmological ideas, the employment of understanding contrary to its vocation in forcing "objects, i.e., possible intuitions, to conform to concepts or ideas, not concepts to possible intuitions, on which alone their objective validity rests." A289=B345 (294). Cf. our discussion of this text in our chapter on The Amphiboly.

²³ A479=B507 (432).

²⁴ Smith translates Ursache (Werke, p. 462) as cause.

²⁵ See Kant's immediately preceeding discussion at A493-4=B521-22 (440-41). ". . . the objects of experience, then are never given in themselves, but only in experience, and have no existence outside it." (492=B521) "To call an appearance a real thing prior to our perceiving it, either means that in the advance of experience we must meet with such a perception, or it means nothing at all. For if we were speaking of a thing in itself, we could indeed say that it exists apart from relation to our senses and possible experience. But we are here speaking of an appearance in space and time." (A493=B521-22).

to sensibility as a receptivity:

If therefore I represent to myself all existing objects of the senses in all time and in all places, I do not set them in space and time (as being there) prior to experience. This representation /i.e., transcendental object = x/ is nothing but the thought of possible experience in its absolute completeness.²⁶

Kant certainly can be no more explicit in his denial that transcendental object is a thing-in-itself.

He immediately goes on to explicitly state that it must remain unknown because empirical rules prevent him from completing this experience.²⁷

If Kant's doctrine of transcendental object is misunderstood the very nature of antinomy and its solution is oversimplified, and thus, not properly understood. The fact that we merely distinguish phenomenon from noumenon does not solve the antinomy, i.e., the unavoidable natural dialectical conflict of reason with itself. The distinction of phenomenon from noumenon simply eliminates the self contradiction of the unconditioned²⁸ and tells us that the unavoidable conflict of reason with itself is not an analytic, i.e., contradictory conflict, but rather a synthetic, i.e., dialectic conflict.²⁹

²⁶ A495=B523-4 (442). Contrast with Graham Bird's interpretation; Graham Bird, op. cit., pp. 68-70.

²⁷ A496=B524 (442) the consistency of this doctrine with the doctrine of indeterminate perception at B422-23 is apparent.

²⁸ cf. "Preface" Bxx (24).

²⁹ cf. Emile Boutroux, La Philosophie de Kant (Paris: Vrin, 1928), pp. 153-55. This passage in Kant may very well be the basis of Bella K. Milmed's contention that Kant introduced the problem of "bridging the

Thus, when we have merely distinguished between phenomenon and noumenon, we have not solved the antinomies, we have merely avoided the analytical-contradictory opposition of the antinomies. Kant does not eschew the remaining task of critically solving the problem of dialectical opposition in The Antinomies.

An antinomy, i.e., an unavoidable natural conflict of reason with itself, rests on and arises from the dialectical (not analytic and contradictory) argument that if the conditioned is given then the entire series is likewise given.³⁰

This dialectical opposition of The Antinomies allows both thesis and antithesis to be false.³¹ This is true because the world is not given as a thing-in-itself [but rather as a transcendental object] and is not therefore given as an object known to be either finite or infinite.³²

If the opposition of thesis and antithesis were analytical, i.e.,

gap between the analytic and the synthetic, between logic and existence, to such an extent that the application of logic to the empirical world is possible." B. K. Milmed, Kant and Current Philosophical Issues (New York University Press, 1961), p. 22. Contrast her statement that noumenon, as object of intuitive understanding resembles transcendental object while the concept of a noumenon resembles the concept of a thing-in-itself and that this is an attempt on Kant's part to attribute a existential character to transcendental object. cf., Ibid., pp. 221-22.

³⁰cf. A497=B525 (443).

³¹In the first two mathematical antinomies. In the case of the second two antinomies, which are dynamical, the case will be changed.

³²A504=B532 (447), A505=B533 (448).

contradictory, we would be assuming the world to be a thing-in-itself, which would remain even if we suspended either our accomplished limited regress, or our representation of a possible complete regress in the series of appearances. If this were the case, we could in no way resolve an antinomy.³³

But since we see that the world is not a thing-in-itself for us at least⁷ we recognize the dialectical opposition of an antinomy, and see that the world exists neither as a finite nor as an infinite total object in itself known by us:

It exists only in the empirical regress of the series of appearances, and is not to be met with as something in itself. If then, this series is always conditioned, and therefore can never be given as complete, the world is not an unconditioned whole, and does not exist as such a whole either of infinite or of finite magnitude.³⁴

An antinomy is thus properly and fully resolved when we see that the world, as a complete and absolute totality (i.e. transcendental object = x), cannot ever be known. It can, however, properly and validly be thought as an object, since our idea of the whole validly applies to the possible total accomplished regress in the synthesis of all the manifold of all appearances in intuition. The fact that the world totality can be thought validly makes antinomies unavoidable.³⁵

³³A504=B532 (447). ³⁴A505=B533 (448).

³⁵A505-6=B533-34 (448). Körner's exposition of the first two antinomies is generally quite lucid; cf. S. Körner, Kant (Baltimore: Penguin, 1955), pp. 113-117. But he does not give an important place to transcendental object in Kant's argument, and thus does not give a basic reason why the illusion, which gives rise to antinomies, is utterly unavoidable. He says that one way of resolving the antinomies

Kant explicitly formulates this complexity in the nature of the antinomies of pure reason in the Transcendental Doctrine of Method when he states that the antinomies

. . . turned out to be only an apparent conflict, resting upon a misunderstanding. In accordance with the common prejudice, it took appearances as being things in themselves, and then required an absolute completeness of their synthesis in the one mode or in the other (this being equally impossible in either way)--a demand which is not at all permissible in respect of appearances. There was, therefore, no real self-contradiction of reason in the propounding of two propositions, that the series of appearances given in themselves has an absolutely first beginning, and that this series is absolutely and in itself without any beginning.³⁶

Kant goes on to point out how greatly the problem of The Antinomies

(this apparently applies to the first two) is to show that the apparent contradiction is a real contradiction following from the internally inconsistent assumption that an appearance is a thing-in-itself, whereas the idea of completion of an unlimited process is that of a non phenomenon intelligible, or thing-in-itself. Ibid., pp. 114, 117.

For Kant's own remarks on the valid employment of transcendental idea as opposed to their invalid transcendent employment due to illusion see paragraph no. 45 of the Prolegomena (pp. 96-97 of Lucas' translation).

Kant says here that reason impels the understanding to wander beyond its own boundaries into the field of mere beings of the understanding. Reason demands completion of the chain of conditions and thus drives the understanding out of its own sphere to represent objects of experience in a series so far extended that no experience can comprehend it. These transcendental ideas are not aiming at extravagant concepts, but merely at the unlimited use of concepts in experience. But the unavoidable illusion here is the further demand on the part of reason that this object beyond the comprehension of experience be known. This entices the understanding into a transcendent employment, to seek noumena which are quite outside possible experience, quite outside the conditions of experience.

³⁶A740=B768 (594). Underlining supplied for emphasis.

differs from the problem of The Ideal of pure reason (Supreme Being vs. no Supreme Being) and The Paralogism of pure reason (abiding unity of soul vs. transitoriness). He states:

. . . in these cases the understanding has to deal only with things-in-themselves and not with appearances . . . There would indeed be a real conflict, if pure reason had anything to say on the negative side which amounted to a positive ground for its negative contentions.³⁷

L. W. Beck observes that after Kant solves the antinomy, "Kant then says that the antinomy and its resolution afford indirect proof of the ideality of appearances, the Transcendental Aesthetic having given the direct proof."³⁸ Beck adds that Kant wrote to Garve³⁹ that the discovery of the antinomy was what originally led to the conclusion that space and time were only forms of appearance.⁴⁰

³⁷A741=B769 (595).

³⁸L. W. Beck, A Commentary on Kant's Critique of Practical Reason (University of Chicago, 1960), p. 186.

³⁹"Sept. 21, 1798, xii, 257".

⁴⁰L. W. Beck, editor, Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason And Other Writings in Moral Philosophy (University of Chicago, 1949), p. 203. This important observation of Kant's own statement that he arrived at his critical philosophy through the nature of antinomy should make us quite aware of the importance to understand properly The Antinomies in order to understand properly Kant's Critical Philosophy. Beck, however, remarks in his Commentary on The Critique of Practical Reason (p. 186 ff) that, because the proof of the antithesis presupposes the validity of Kantian phenomenalism, and the proof of the thesis is a typical rationalistic argument, the antinomy alone cannot be used as a premise for the phenomenality of nature, even though it may have suggested it to Kant.

Weldon remarks that the antithesis must be considered justified even though Kant has said both thesis and antithesis are false but only in so far as the infinity is considered simply "the process of

The indirect proof of the ideality of appearances goes as follows. The world, as a whole existing in itself as object, is neither finite nor infinite, i.e., both thesis and antithesis are false. Both are false because we have here a dialectical illusion, an illusion resting on the assumption that transcendental object is known (not that thing in itself is known. We are well beyond that point of the argument.) It is thus false that the world, the sum total of all appearances, is an absolutely whole totality existing in itself (as appearance in itself). Thus it follows that appearances in general are nothing outside our representations--this is just what is meant by their ideality.⁴¹

Kant then emphasizes the fact that the critical solution of antinomies shows us that our idea of a totality of object is not at all knowledge of a total object; the critical solution shows us that the principle of reason is regulative, not constitutive.⁴² It is a rule, a regulative principle "postulating what we ought to do in the regress, but not anticipating what is present [gegeben] in the object as it is in itself prior to all regress."⁴³

The illusion of reason is to take this regulative rule as a constitutive cosmological principle by which we could ascribe full objective

division can be carried on indefinitely, but that the possibility of the indefinite regress does not suppose the actual existence of an infinite number of independent reals, since the process itself deals with phenomena not noumena". T. D. Weldon, Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (Oxford, 1958), p. 207, emphasis supplied.

⁴¹A506-7=B534-5 (448-49). ⁴²A508-9=B536-7 (450).

⁴³A509=B537 (450).

reality (N. B., reality, not validity) to an idea that serves merely as a rule. Kant tells us that the proper meaning of this rule is that it does not tell us what an object is, i.e., it does not result in knowledge of an object. It tells us only how the empirical regress is to be carried out so as to arrive at the complete concept of an object, even though it can never reach this goal.⁴⁴ The total object, the total series of the empirically conditioned, as in itself either finite or infinite, cannot actually be given in experience. It is only in the idea, in the thinking the object, which cannot be given in experience, and thus the totality cannot be known.

The first two antinomies are thus false in both the thesis and the antithesis because we no longer have a question of whether the series of conditions is in itself either finite or infinite, but only how we are to carry out the empirical regress and how far we are to continue it.⁴⁵ This patently concerns something far more subtle and profound than a mere distinction between phenomenon and noumenon.

⁴⁴Note that this does not contradict Kant's statements regarding degrees of objective reality (cf. our discussion in Chapter II, Section C of this thesis). We can quite legitimately interpret Kant's criticism of applying objective reality to a merely regulative idea in this discussion to mean that he is criticising the applying of objective reality of the first order (i.e. like that of the categories) to a regulative idea of speculative reason which has "objective reality" of a lesser kind (even though it is greater than that of a noumenon or of an ideal of pure reason which really has no discernible "objective reality" for pure reason in its speculative employment).

⁴⁵A509-14=B537-42 (450-53).

Kant further reinforces our view of the nature of antinomy in Section 9 of The Antinomies. Kant discusses the empirical employment of the regulative principle of reason. He begins⁴⁶ by saying that it is in our considering an absolute totality as known /rather than our consideration of transcendental object = x/ that we are involved in an improper employment of reason "in which reason demands this unconditioned completeness from what it assumes to be a thing in itself."⁴⁷ The principle of pure reason is thus invalid as a "constitutive principle of appearances in themselves."⁴⁸ When we recognize that the principle of reason is a regulative idea rather than a constitutive one, i.e., that it does not yield knowledge of an object, and yet has subjective significance and conformity with objects of possible experience,⁴⁹ then the illusion is destroyed and reason is no longer at variance with itself.⁵⁰

Kant then goes on to say that even though we never experience an absolute limit of the series of appearances, we quite generally represent to ourselves

. . . the series of all past states of the world, as well as of all the things which co-exist in cosmic space, /which/

⁴⁶A516=B544 (454). ⁴⁷A516=B544 (454) emphasis supplied.

⁴⁸A516=B544 (454) emphasis supplied. Smith's translation reads "appearances /viewed as things/ in themselves".

⁴⁹It is patent to us by now that the concept of noumenon could not have any critical conformity to objects of possible experience.

⁵⁰Loc. cit.

is itself merely a possible empirical regress which I think to myself, though in an indeterminate manner.⁵¹

The words which I have underlined in this statement make a workable basic definition of what Kant means by transcendental object = x.

The upshot of this discussion is that we cannot, in the First Antinomy, say more than "that the regress in the series of appearances as a determination of the magnitude of the world proceeds in indefinitum."⁵²

Kant goes on to point out that in the Second Antinomy the regress must be said to be in infinitum. This means simply that

When, however, we have in mind the transcendental division of appearance in general, the question does not await an answer from experience; it is decided by a principle of reason which prescribes that, in the decomposition of the extended, the empirical regress, in conformity with the nature of this appearance, be never regarded as absolutely completed.⁵³

Again Kant is consistent with the doctrine of transcendental object = x. It is never given as an absolutely complete whole, i.e., it remains unknown. But this is not to distinguish it from appearance as a noumenon. This is to distinguish it from mere appearances as they are met with in accomplished sense intuitions, and as these appearances are productive of knowledge of object.

⁵¹ A51=B54 (455). Emphasis supplied.

⁵² A521=B549 (457).

⁵³ A527=B555 (461).

C. The Dynamical Antinomies--Intellectual
Object vs. Intelligible Object

Kant explains that the final two antinomies involve a dynamical synthesis and thus their object is essentially different from that in the mathematical antinomies; so very different, that in the final two antinomies both the thesis and the antithesis may be true.⁵⁴

The dynamical antinomies admit a purely intelligible condition, i.e., a condition which is not a part of the series, whereas the mathematical antinomies admitted only a sensible condition. Thus we must now satisfy both reason, on the one hand, and understanding, on the other.⁵⁵ This was not the case in the first two antinomies where we had to satisfy only the understanding.

In the case of natural causality our conflict would arise as it did in the mathematical antinomies if appearances were things-in-themselves. In such a case the conditions would always be members of the series as conditioned and the series would be too large or too small for the understanding. But then, when we considered the doctrine of transcendental object = x, the series of natural causality would be thought in its proper dimensions for understanding, and the illusory conflict of reason would disappear, in the order of nature. This would thus satisfy the understanding, but we must also satisfy reason which creates a pure transcendental idea of freedom (i.e. spontaneous causality), which borrows nothing from experience and which refers to

⁵⁴A529-30=B557-8 (462).

⁵⁵A530-32=B558-60 (463-64).

an object that cannot be determined or given in any experience. This is not a concern with the magnitude of the natural series, but it is rather a question of whether freedom can exist at all outside the total series of natural causality, and yet be compatible with that series.

To confuse appearance and the ground of its objective necessity, transcendental object = x⁷ with thing-in-itself would destroy the very possibility of freedom.⁵⁶ But, when we see that appearances are merely representations, we leave open the possibility of a free causality which would not contradict natural cause. This free causality would not contradict natural causality because it would lie entirely outside the possible total series of natural causes, and would neither be determined by appearances nor be the ground of the objective reality

⁵⁶"For if appearances are things in themselves, freedom cannot be upheld. Nature will then be the complete and sufficient determining cause of every event . . . If, on the other hand, appearances are not taken for more than they actually are; if they are not viewed as things in themselves, but merely as representations, connected according to empirical laws, they must themselves have grounds which are not appearances. [But such an intelligible ground, in respect to its causality is not determined through appearances, even though its effects appear, and so they can be determined through other appearances.] While the effects are to be found in the series of empirical conditions, the intelligible cause. . . My only purpose [here] has been to point out that . . . the inevitable consequence of obstinately insisting upon the reality of appearances is to destroy all freedom". A537-38=B564-65 (466-67). The sentence in brackets is my own translation of: "Eine solche intelligibele Ursache aber wird in Ansehung ihrer Kausalität nicht durch Erscheinungen bestimmt, obzwar ihre Wirkungen erscheinen, und so durch andere Erscheinungen bestimmt werden können. (Werke, p. 491). Smith's translation here is correct, but we want to give greater emphasis to the fact that such an intelligible ground in respect to its causality is not at all determined.

of our concepts of appearances. This free cause is transcendent and is radically other than the transcendental object = x.⁵⁷

Kant's continuation of the discussion of possible harmony of freedom with natural necessity affords one of the most lucid illustrations of the importance of his authentic doctrine of transcendental object. It also illustrates the enormity of ramifications in a misunderstanding of this doctrine.

At A538=B566 (467) Kant states that appearances, since they are not things-in-themselves, must rest upon a transcendental object which determines them as mere representations. Kant then says that there is nothing to prevent us from ascribing to this transcendental object, besides the quality in terms of which it appears, a causality which is not appearance. This remark is not a skepticism on Kant's part regarding his doctrine of transcendental object.⁵⁸

On the contrary, when we read the passage at A538-43=B566-71 as a unit, we see that Kant immediately warns that to ascribe noumenal qualities to transcendental object is to "yield to the illusion of transcendental realism, [thus], neither nature nor freedom would remain."⁵⁹

⁵⁷A532-37=B561-65 (464-67). Contrast Graham Bird's discussion of this passage. Op. Cit., p. 195.

⁵⁸Kant's "skepticism" here is the same sort of "skepticism" we found in the Amphiboly at A288=B345 (293-4); cf. our discussion of N. K. Smith's Commentary, pp. 328 and 412 regarding A288=B345 and A402, B407 thru B411. Cf. also Caird, op. cit., p. 581.

⁵⁹A543=B571 (470).

In so yielding to the illusion of transcendental realism and ascribing a causality which is not appearance to natural events, we would be ascribing a purely intelligible character to the object.

This object would be a thing-in-itself.⁶⁰

This object, this thing-in-itself, is something thought by reason alone, and free from all influences of sensibility and all determination . . . it is noumenon."⁶¹

But this thing must not be mistaken for transcendental object, i.e., the possible totality of regress in the synthesis of all appearances in experience. If it were so mistaken, "Its causality, in so far as it [alleges to be] intellectual, would not at all stand within the series of empirical conditions, which [conditions] make the given event necessary in the world of sense."⁶²

N. K. Smith translates the phrase "so fern sie intellektuell ist" to read "so far as it is intelligible". Smith adds the note⁶³ that Kant's employment of the term "intellektuell" is misleading here; that Kant uses the less misleading term "intelligible" in all other cases.

⁶⁰ A539=B567 (468). ⁶¹ A541=B569 (469).

⁶² This is my own translation of the text as it appears at Werke, p. 493 (A540=B568): "Mit einem Worte, die Kausalität desselben, so fern sie intellektuell ist, stände gar nicht in der Reihe empirischer Bedingungen, welche die Begebenheit in der Sinnenwelt notwendig machen." Compare N. K. Smith's translation "In a word, its causality, so far as it is intelligible, would not have a place in the series of those empirical conditions through which the event is rendered necessary in the world of sense." (468).

⁶³ (468, note no. 3).

Smith's criticism of Kant here is particularly interesting in the light of his remarks elsewhere which are quite complimentary to the Refutation of Idealism, which also employs the term "intellektuell", as we point out below. Smith says:

It represents a position peculiar to the maturer portions of the Analytic; the rest of the Critique is not rewritten so as to harmonize with it, or to develop the consequences which consistent holding to it must involve.⁶⁴

We feel that Kant is thoroughly consistent in his use of "intellektuell" here. We feel that "intellektuell" is consistent with the doctrinal maturity to which Smith refers.

The fact is that Kant quite deliberately uses the term "intellektuell" in the phrase "so fern sie intellektuell ist".⁶⁵ He uses it here just as he does elsewhere when considering the proper meaning of transcendental object. We saw him employ this very same term at B423 when he said "ist sie rein intellektuell"⁶⁶ in reference to the "I" in the proposition "I think". The very same employment of this term appears at B278 in the Refutation of Idealism. Kant states that the consciousness of myself in the representation "I" is not an intuition, but rather a purely intellectual representation ("eine bloss intel-

⁶⁴N. K. Smith, op. cit., p. 272.

⁶⁵For Kant's own observations on the use of "intellektuell" as opposed to "intelligible" see the second foot note to §34 of the Prolegomena, P. G. Lucas, translator (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1953), p. 78.

⁶⁶Werke, p. 356.

lektuelle Vorstellung". Werke, p. 257) of the spontaneity ("Selbst-tätigkeit") of a thinking subject.

Let us now return to the text at A540=B568. In yielding to the illusion of transcendental realism we would mistake the transcendental object as a thing-in-itself. This illusion would yield a purely intelligible character, namely, a causality as totally and utterly removed from the series of empirical conditions.

This /in fact/⁶⁷ intelligible character can never, indeed, be immediately known, for nothing can be perceived except in so far as it appears.⁶⁸ It would have to be thought in accordance with the empirical character just as we are constrained to think a transcendental object as underlying appearances, though we can know nothing of what it is in itself.⁶⁹

It is patently impossible, in the light of Kant's larger context, to think a purely intelligible character in accordance with the empirical character, since the purely intelligible character is free from all influences of sensibility and all determination. A purely intellectual character, if properly employed, can be so thought since it is not totally free from all the influences of sensibility, but is limited, as

⁶⁷ Since Kant now employs the term "intelligibel" we understand him to mean "in fact intelligible", not intellectual, as we were misled to believe.

⁶⁸ Kant's text does not break into a new sentence here as Smith's translation does, but rather it inserts a comma followed by an "aber" which Smith does not translate. Cf. Werke, p. 493. The unity of thought sequence is important here.

⁶⁹ A540=B568 (468). I have supplied the underlining in the last two phrases for emphasis.

to its objective validity, by its application to the possible total synthesis of all the manifold of intuition in experience.

It is, in fact, a law of the understanding that, without exception, all events are determined empirically in nature. It is "only in virtue of this law . . . [that] appearances constitute a nature and become objects of experience."⁷⁰

Reason falls into antinomy when it falls victim to the illusion that the regress of synthesis in intuition can be accomplished, and thus the unconditioned in the series can be known. This of course is impossible. To fall victim to this illusion is to fall victim to the further illusion that appearances are things-in-themselves, i.e., illusion of transcendental realism. "Were we to yield to the illusion of transcendental realism neither nature nor freedom would remain."⁷¹

The only question Kant is concerned with here is whether freedom and natural necessity within the same acting subject contradict one another.⁷²

Only as we ascend from the empirical object to the transcendental should we find that this subject, together

⁷⁰A542=B570 (470). ⁷¹A543=B571 (470).

⁷²Kant is not, for example, concerned with the question of whether or not the very causality the subject exercises in the natural order needs, to exist as a causality at all, a cause which is itself uncaused outside the natural order. Natural necessity in the world of experience is totally justified with the justification of the very possibility of any valid objective knowledge whatsoever. This objective necessity which the subject represents to himself rests ultimately, as we have seen, on the transcendental unity of apperception as objective, i.e., transcendental object = x.

with all its causality in the field of appearance has in its noumenon⁷³ certain conditions which must be regarded as purely intelligible.⁷⁴

"Phaenomemon" would probably be the better reading here, since in our consideration of transcendental object we have not passed beyond "phaenomenon" into the realm of "noumenon". Nevertheless, we recognize that something purely intelligible, something over and above the capability of pure speculative reason, is required to explain adequately the freedom of which we are conscious. We recognize that freedom causes speculative reason to fall into insoluble conflict with itself it is considered to lie within the realm of appearances as grounded in transcendental object. We recognize also, that freedom becomes an impossibility if these appearances are considered to be things-in-themselves.

"Noumenon" is a suitable reading here if it is understood to lie beyond the transcendental object as a merely possible entity for speculative reason. An entity with which speculative reason is in no way concerned.

Kant makes this quite clear in The Critique of Practical Reason. Natural necessity belongs to "phaenomenon" only, but the same subject is conscious of his existence as a thing-in-itself not standing under

⁷³ Smith reads "noymenon" here, for "phaenomenon", with Hartenstein. Either reading is suitable if interpreted properly. See our discussion of this passage immediately following.

⁷⁴ A545=B573 (471).

temporal conditions.⁷⁵ He says, "I am justified in thinking of my existence as that of a noumenon in an intelligible world."⁷⁶ A short time later in the text Kant also says:

Then it is clear that, if, its [pure reason's] capacity in the former [i.e. speculative] is not sufficient to establish certain propositions positively, (which however do not contradict it), it must assume these propositions just as soon as they are sufficiently certified as belonging imprescriptibly to the practical interest of pure reason.⁷⁷

The subject of speculative reason, quite validly considering himself as transcendental object, recognizes that he has some conditions which are purely intelligible. But rather than falling victim to the illusion that these conditions are included in the phenomenal order, or that he can make any valid objective considerations of them with pure reason in its speculative capacity, he must recognize that any consideration of these purely intelligible conditions must be relegated to the order of pure reason in its practical employment:⁷⁸

Thus in our judgements in regard to the causality of free actions, we can get as far as the intelligible cause, but not beyond it. We can know that it is free, that is, that it is determined independently of sensibility, and that in this way it may be the sensible unconditioned condition of appearances. But to explain why in the given circumstances the intelligible character should give just these appearances and this empirical character transcends all the powers of our reason, indeed all its rights of questioning,

⁷⁵ Immanuel Kant, The Critique of Practical Reason and Other Writings in Moral Philosophy, L. W. Beck, translator and editor (University of Chicago, 1949), p. 203.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 218-19. ⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 225.

⁷⁸ A547=B575 - A556=B584 (472-78).

just as if we were to ask why the transcendental object of our outer sensible intuition gives intuition in space only and not some other mode of intuition.⁷⁹

Thus, again we see, the antinomy rests on the illusion that reason can begin the series of conditions in the appearance by means of a sensible unconditioned. This illusion arises from an improper employment of the regulative idea of transcendental object as if it were constitutive, i.e., productive of knowledge, of a totality of object. Such an employment would require either that the regress of synthesis in the series of conditions be accomplished, or that the first appearance be known as unconditioned. The former is contradictory in itself; the latter violates the universal law of causality in nature, without which no experience of any object is possible.

It is only when we recognize that free cause is completely beyond even the realm of a possible totality of experience (i.e. transcendental object = x) that we will recognize that free cause is entirely out of bounds for objective consideration by speculative reason precisely because it is purely intelligible. Thus we will be able to recognize that "causality through freedom is at least not incompatible with nature."⁸⁰

This recognition that it is free cause which lies in the noumenal sphere makes the allegation that Kant places the ground of natural

⁷⁹A557=B585 (478). Underlining supplied for emphasis.

⁸⁰A558=B586 (479).

necessity in the noumenal sphere totally inconsistent with Kant's
 authentic doctrine.⁸¹

In the fourth antinomy, it is not necessary that the condition in this dynamical regress should form a part of the series along with the conditioned:

. . . this way of conceiving how an unconditioned being may serve as the ground of appearance differs from that which we followed in the previous subsection, in dealing with the empirically unconditioned cause of freedom. For there the thing itself was a cause (substantia phaenomenon) conceived to belong to the series of conditions and only its causality was thought as intelligible. Here on the other hand the necessary being must be thought as entirely outside the series of the sensible world (as ens extramundanum), and as purely intelligible.⁸²

The sensible world contains only appearances: "In this field things-in-themselves are never objects to us."⁸³

We mistake appearances for things-in-themselves if we leap beyond the context of sensibility. Kant says that we thus

treat appearances as if they were things in themselves which exist apart from their transcendental ground, and which can remain standing while we seek an outside cause of their existence. . . . on the other hand, to think an intelligible ground of the appearances, that is of the sensible world, and to think it as free from the contingency of appearances, does not conflict either with the unlimited empirical regress in the series of

⁸¹ Contrast Ewings allegation that Kant contends "the real ground of the causal connection always belongs to the noumenal sphere and is for this very reason unknowable." A. C. Ewing, op. cit., p. 170. Cf. also pp. 102-3.

⁸² A561=B589 (480-1) underlining supplied for emphasis.

⁸³ A563=B591 (482).

appearances nor with their thoroughgoing contingency. That indeed, is all that we had to do in order to remove the apparent antinomy.⁸⁴

Thus we can understand Kant's proper meaning in the "Concluding Note on the whole Antinomy of Pure Reason".⁸⁵ He says that as soon as we posit the unconditioned as entirely outside the sensible world, therefore outside all possible experience, our ideas are no longer transcendental and cosmological, but they become purely transcendent.⁸⁶ Their objective reality is not based on the completion of the empirical series but on pure a priori concepts. Such ideas have a purely intelligible object. These objects may indeed be admitted to be transcendental object,⁸⁷ but there is not the least justification for doing so because, as such, transcendental object would be cut off from all empirical concepts. We would, therefore, be cut off from any reasons that would establish the possibility of such an object. It is in fact a purely intelligible object, a thing-in-itself, a step beyond the sensible world, which obliges us, since we are in a totally new area of

⁸⁴A563-64=B591-92 (482). Underlining supplied for emphasis.

⁸⁵A565-67=B593-95.

⁸⁶The full significance of our discussion of degrees of objective reality (cf. Chapter II, Section C of this thesis) comes to light in this statement by Kant. The idea of transcendental object is a necessary and integral idea in the valid employment of pure reason in its speculative capacity. The idea of a thing-in-itself (noumenon), on the other hand, finds a valid place only in the practical employment of pure reason.

⁸⁷This is the same "skepticism" we have seen Kant employ elsewhere.

knowledge, i.e., knowledge of things in so far as they are purely intelligible, to begin an enquiry into the absolutely necessary being.

This enquiry takes Kant into The Ideal of Pure Reason, and beyond, into the realm of Pure Practical Reason--beyond the scope of this thesis.

To summarize, in Chapter IV we have seen that the interpretation of transcendental object gleaned from the Analytic enabled us better to understand reason's natural conflict with itself. We have seen that Kant quite explicitly makes use of the doctrine of transcendental object in the Dialectic to make us so clearly aware of the nature of paralogism and antinomy that we can readily avoid the pitfalls which these dialectical self-conflicts of reason present to the non-critical understanding. Since, as Kant himself stated, the genesis of Kant's critical philosophy occurred in his realisation of the dialectical conflict of reason with itself, we have been able to increase our understanding of the nature of critical philosophy itself by means of the better understanding of the Dialectic. A proper interpretation of transcendental object helped us to accomplish this. Furthermore, our examination of the Dialectic strongly confirmed and reiterated in more explicit terms the interpretation of transcendental object which we had gleaned from the Analytic.

We have seen (a) that Kant bases this illusion of paralogism on the improper application of the categories to a merely possible total regress in the synthesis of intuition of the self in inner sense. He mitigates the effectiveness of this illusion by pointing out that we never have an accomplished totality of intuition of the self, thus

that the self is not ever given as an object in intuition. Therefore, the categories cannot be applied to the "I" in any manner. It is also evident from his text that the categories cannot be applied to the unity of self since the transcendental unity of apperception is involved in the grounding of the categories themselves.

We have seen (b) that Kant clearly distinguishes between the world as phenomenon and as noumenon as a preliminary measure to clarify the nature of the conflict in The Antinomies. When we see that there is no question of the world being given as a thing-in-itself we clearly recognize that the conflict in The Antinomies is dialectical, not analytic or contradictory. Then, when we recognize that the world as a totality of phenomena is never actually given we clearly recognize that the world as a totality of phenomena (as the transcendental object = x) can never be known as either an infinite or as a finite object. A proper understanding of the role of transcendental object is essential for a proper understanding of Kant's resolution of the mathematical antinomies.

We have seen (c) that Kant states that we satisfy the understanding in the resolution of the dynamical antinomies in the same way that we did in the mathematical antinomies. However, the dynamical antinomies are also concerned with a purely intelligible condition outside the total series of phenomena. Therefore we must also satisfy the pure reason. Pure reason is satisfied when it learns that noumenal entities such as freedom or God are at least not demonstrably incompatible with the series of phenomenal conditions in the world. However, a proper

treatment of such noumenal entities must be reserved to pure reason in its practical employment.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

We have seen the evidence that argues that it is possible to interpret the doctrine of transcendental object univocally throughout both editions of the Critique. It can be interpreted not only as a critically mature doctrine, but also as a subtle and complex doctrine at the very heart of Kant's critical philosophy.

We have seen (1) that transcendental object is a mature critical doctrine. It cannot be identified with thing-in-itself. Nor can it be considered as a merely subjective element in knowing. Nor can it be considered as simply a correlate of the subjectivity as it is encountered in the transcendental unity of apperception.

We have seen (2) that Kant's text sustains an interpretation of transcendental object as a pregnant, though unknown, possible reality in the world of appearances. We validly represent it as an object to ourselves in an idea.

We have seen (3) that transcendental object is a pure object, an unknown third something between the realm of things-in-themselves and mere appearances, that it is synthetically represented as a possible totality in the empirical synthesis of all appearances in one experience; that its unknowability is due to the fact that its idea can never be applied to an actually accomplished totality in the synthesis of appearances.

We have seen (4) that transcendental object is involved with the world of appearances, not the realm of things-in-themselves (noumena), since it is represented as a possible total synthesis of appearances.

We have seen (5) that transcendental object is intimately bound up with the transcendental unity of apperception in that it makes that transcendental unity a necessary, thus fully objective unity; that it is thus the ultimate ground of the objectivity of all objects in experience, the ultimate ground of the valid employment of the categories as that employment is justified in the Transcendental Deduction--it is, in short, the sine qua non of the very possibility of objects in experience.

We have seen (6) that the transcendental object, so interpreted, plays a meaningful and truly critical role in the proper solution of pure reason's dialectical conflict with itself when its unknowability as a possible totality in the series of appearances is properly kept in view. Without such an interpretation a proper understanding of the critical problem manifested by the antinomies is impossible.

We feel that this interpretation is not merely helpful in avoiding false accusations against Kant as an inconsistent and at times, highly uncritical philosopher in his Critique of Pure Reason, but also opens up a new possibility to better appreciate the rigorous, critical, and demanding philosophical system of Immanuel Kant.

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APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by John W. Hauch has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

September 12, 1963
Date

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